

**THE STANDPOINT, PERSPECTIVE AND HORIZON OF THE  
THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF THE FOURTH EVANGELIST**

by  
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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The thesis undertakes a twofold task, interpretation and communication, in attempting to understand the theological thought of the evangelist as a whole. The methods employed are historical, philosophical and theological. This thesis is the result of an objectification of the differentiated consciousness both of the evangelist and of a present day Christian. The interaction between their minds or thought-worlds makes up an hermeneutical circle. The approaches to the Christian gospel-event are empirical in the task of interpretation and heuristic in the task of communication. Only selected relevant texts, however, are discussed.

Chapter I begins with the construction of a working definition of a present day Christian's view of the Christian gospel and religion. The correlation between the thought-world of Isaiah, Jesus, the evangelist and a present day Christian is analysed within the perspective of a linear concept of time and history. In discussing the standpoint, perspective and horizon of the theological discourse of the Christian gospel, particular attention is given both to Christians' witnessing-believing-understanding of the Christian gospel-event and to a higher and more comprehensive Christian view-point.

Chapter II deals with the origin, formation and development of the gospel traditions of the early Church. A compound word, 'Judaeo-Jesus-Christian' theology, is employed to explain the three phases of 'change and continuity' from Judaism to Christianity. The family correlation between biblical theology, Christian theology and evangelical theology is discussed. The witnessing-believing-understanding of these three factors, sc. the life and ministry of Jesus, the OT scripture and Christians' fresh experiences, distinguished and eventually divided Christianity from Judaism. The evangelist's three interpretative patterns, sc. the 'prophecy-fulfilment', the 'witnessing-to-Jesus' and the 'Jesus-sublating-the OT', contributed to the origin, formation and development of the Fourth Gospel and its theology.

Chapter III discusses the ontologically structured metaphysical system of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel and the three, sc. the temporal, the spatial and the distinction-within-unity, frames of reference. A further definition of the Christian gospel is attempted. Consequently, an ascending-descending gospel interpretative scheme emerges. The implication of the incarnation-resurrection faith in the evangelist's presentation of the overall Gospel-image of Jesus is explored. The inclusiveness of Christian evangelical theology is discussed.

The thesis attempts to explicate the meaning of the contemporaneous divine activity of the living God and the Johannine Jesus with men and women in the love-fellowship in the world here and now in the emerging present.



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## INTRODUCTION

A student of the Fourth Gospel has at least a twofold task, interpretation and communication: interpretation, because he has to understand the Gospel, and communication, because he has to present his understanding to his contemporaries. The present thesis will not seek to discuss the literary unity of the Gospel, sc. the unity of a source or sources, of types of narratives or discourses, of organisation or structure, nor the unity of the background of thought. The thesis, however, recognises in the Gospel various contradictory statements, discrepancies, inconsistencies, abrupt changes in ideas and affirmations, problems of displacement and anachronism, and the uncompromising claims of the glorified Jesus in his earthly ministry, etc.<sup>1</sup> What the thesis seeks to accomplish is an attempt at understanding the theological thought of the evangelist as a whole, hence its coherence, in so far as it may be attainable from what the evangelist has expressed in his Gospel.

The thesis presupposes the ground work of exegesis of the text.<sup>2</sup> However, only selected relevant texts are discussed for reasons of

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1. cf. W. F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, 4th ed. (rev. by C. K. Barrett), Part II, chap. I, "The Unity of the Gospel and its Relation to the Johannine Writings", pp. 95-110. cf. also E. Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus, chap. II, "The Glory of Christ", pp. 4-26.

2. C. H. Dodd, in The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, says, "It is in general a sound maxim that any interpretation of the thought of a work as a whole should be based on a precise exegesis of the text ... At every step the exegete is faced with the necessity of considering his text in the light of the ultimate meaning of the work ... Thus in the study of this gospel, exegesis of the text, and interpretation in the wider sense, are interdependent to an unusual degree." (pp. 3f.).

methodical delimitation. The critical methods employed are historical, philosophical and theological. This thesis is the result of an objectification of the differentiated consciousness both of the evangelist and of a present day Christian. The interaction between their minds or thought-worlds makes up an hermeneutical circle. The approaches to the Christian gospel-event are empirical in the task of interpretation and heuristic in the task of communication.

Terms or concepts that serve as a point of departure are often provisionally defined or explained for the furtherance of knowledge and learning. Conscious effort is made to state or explain, where the context requires, as clearly as possible, the data, principles, standpoints, perspectives, horizons, methods, hypotheses, presuppositions, absolute presuppositions and the fundamental Christian beliefs. This is important with a view to yielding a better and more coherent understanding of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel and a more relevant and effective communication of it.

The Christian gospel has four basic components, sc. the Christian living God, Jesus, mankind and world. They present its students with the task and problems of a fourfold theological discipline or subject-matter, sc. theology, christology, anthropology and cosmology - how to think and talk about God, Jesus Christ, mankind and the world they live in. Thus the thesis will have to be concerned with these disciplines and their correlation. This concern is especially acute in view of the present day religious and theological situation, where the theistic world-view and its relevance to the modern way of life and thinking as a whole are on the wane.



In constructing a discourse on Christian evangelical theology<sup>1</sup> the thesis methodologically has appropriated B. J. F. Lonergan's Method in Theology and borrowed from him his system of thought, an "ontologically structured metaphysics",<sup>2</sup> and also has appropriated R. G. Collingwood's principles of history and the concept of "absolute presuppositions".<sup>3</sup> However, the thesis has to supply a christological component.<sup>4</sup>

The insight into the complex reality that a gospel-event, i.e. the Christian experience of Christian belief and life, analysed and understood in terms of a present, living, personal, relational happening, takes place, if it takes place at all, always in the emerging present in the contemporary world between God, Jesus, believers and their contemporaries, and the insight into the inseparability of a compound reality, sc. the reality of the living agents, the reality of their existence and the reality of the ongoing process of their individual and corporate life - these two insights give the writer excitement and stimulus to reflect upon how he employs a historical, philosophical and theological criticism and empirical

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1. Christian evangelical theology means simply the theology of the Christian gospel. It does not mean the old 'fundamental' or 'orthodox' theology.

2. This phrase is found in the book Insight, p.734.

3. v. An Autobiography and The Idea of History for his principles of history and philosophy of history, and An Essay on Metaphysics for the concept of "absolute presuppositions".

4. On christological thinking, reasoning and imagination see J. McIntyre, The Shape of Christology; R. H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology; E. Schweizer, Jesus; N. Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered; C. F. D. Moule, The Origin of Christology; B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (eds.), Christ and Spirit in the New Testament. It goes without saying that the Fourth Gospel is a super bonum source book of christology.

and heuristic approach in his study of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel in particular and the Christian gospel in general.

The thesis consists of three essays. They form three circuits in a spiral manner. So there is bound to be some repetition. The first chapter deals with some problems involved in the twofold task of interpretation and communication. An attempt is made at constructing a working definition, which will be normative within the system of the present discourse, of a present day Christian's view of the Christian gospel and religion. The constructed view of the Christian gospel and religion together with a view of the Fourth Gospel will determine the nature and scope of the present thesis. The formal correlation between the thought-world of Isaiah, Jesus, the evangelist and a present day Christian is analysed from a movable, sc. real and/or imaginary, standpoint within the perspective and horizon of a linear concept of time and history. In discussing the standpoint, perspective and horizon of a discourse of the evangelical theology of the Fourth Gospel, particular attention is given to the Christian witnessing-believing-understanding of Christians' experience of the Christian gospel-event as a present, living, personal, relational happening between God, Jesus, believers and their contemporaries in their contemporary world at every emerging present. The insight into the possibility of discussing the truth of the absolute presuppositions and of the fundamental Christian beliefs yields an emergence of a higher and more comprehensive Christian viewpoint. This viewpoint enables Christians to see more clearly some advantages and limitations of theological discourse in an ongoing Christian mission in the world.

The second chapter considers 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian' theology in transition and the emergence of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel in the historical, religious and theological perspective of the origin, formation and development of the theology of the early Church within a Christian community to which the evangelist belonged. A compound word, 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian' theology is employed to explain the three phases of 'change and continuity' from Judaism to Christianity and from Jewish (OT) faith to Christian faith. The family correlation between biblical theology, Christian theology and evangelical theology is discussed and the central and privileged position which the Christian evangelical theology holds in the Christian theological family is affirmed. The three factors that contributed to the transition and emergence of Christian standpoints, perspectives and horizons of Christian faith are

- (a) Judaism and the OT scripture,
- (b) Jesus and the early Church's gospel traditions and
- (c) the Fourth evangelist, his contemporaries and their fresh experiences.

Christians' witnessing-believing-understanding of these three factors distinguished and eventually divided Christianity from Judaism. The evangelist's three interpretative patterns, sc. the 'prophecy-fulfilment', the 'witnessing-to-Jesus' and the 'Jesus-sublating-the OT' pattern, contributed to the origin, formation and development of the Fourth Gospel and its theology.

On the basis of the findings in the previous two chapters, the third and final chapter considers two pivotal issues: the issue of



the ontologically structured metaphysical system and the issue of the three frames of reference of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel, for the purpose of obtaining a more coherent way of interpreting the Christian gospel and in communicating it within a more unified system to our contemporaries. A further definition of the Christian gospel, in its technical sense - the good news about the man, his coming into existence, his life and ministry, his death and resurrection, etc., is attempted. Consequently, a two-fold, ascending and descending, gospel interpretative scheme emerges. The implication of the incarnation-resurrection faith in the evangelist's presentation of the over-all Gospel-image of Jesus is explored. The Judaeo-Christian theistic world-view and the doctrine of creation are re-evaluated within the system of the ontologically structured metaphysical discourse of the Christian evangelical theology. Some selected texts are discussed in the light of the temporal, the spatial and the distinction-within-unity frames of reference. Finally, the thesis claims that the Christian evangelical theology is able to subsume all human daily experiences, philosophical understandings, moral practices and religious beliefs, because of the Christians' witnessing-believing-understanding of the living God, the crucified-risen Jesus, people and world and their relations.

## CHAPTER I

### THE TASK AND PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION AND COMMUNICATION OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

1. The perennial task of interpretation and re-interpretation in the construction of a present day Christian's view of the Christian gospel and religion.

The thesis begins with the assumption that its twofold task - interpretation and communication - requires the construction of a working hypothesis, which will be normative within the system of the present thesis, of a present day Christian's view of the Christian gospel and religion. This construction is based upon a present day Christian's interpretation and understanding of the Fourth Gospel on the one hand, and on the other of the belief and life of our contemporaries. The Fourth Gospel is taken to be the end-product of the evangelist's interpretation and construction both of the early Church's gospel traditions and of the fresh experience of his contemporaries. Further, the early Church's gospel traditions are viewed to be the Jewish Christians' interpretations and constructions of the life, ministry and death of Jesus within the matrix of the Jewish people and religion.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover the Jewish Christians' works are viewed as the re-interpretations of Jesus' life, ministry and death by the

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1. v.H. Riesenfeld, "The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings", in The Gospels Reconsidered: A selection of papers read at the International Congress on the four Gospels in 1957, pp.131-153; F. C. Grant, An Introduction to New Testament Thought. Other views are not considered because of methodical delimitation. But cf. C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel; R. A. Culpepper, The Johannine School, Chap.X, "The school of Jesus".



Christian Jews.<sup>1</sup> We shall call the latter the 'ancient view', 'Johannine type', of the Christian gospel traditions.

Thus a present day Christian's view of Jesus' history and theology, his life and thought is conditioned by the view presented in the Fourth Gospel, which in turn is conditioned by the Jewish Christians' views of the gospel traditions, and is further conditioned by the Christian Jews' views of the gospel traditions. The latter views are, of course, the result of the painstaking historical and theological constructions and formations based on various sources, such as the civil, political and religious life of the Jews, of Jesus and of the Christian Jews.

In our construction of a working hypothesis of a present day Christian's view of the Christian gospel, we find ourselves in need

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1. These names, the Jews, the Christian Jews, the Jewish Christians and the Christians, will be used to differentiate hypothetically distinguished historical phases in the development and transformation of the Christian movement within Judaism, especially in the incipient stages of its transition period. The early Church's Christians were originally Jews. We can imagine that at first some of the Jews became the followers of Jesus or the Jesus-movement. They might be called Christian Jews and were differentiated from other Jews - a religious differentiation. This may have been the case when the Christian believers were on the fairly solid ground of the Christian movement within Judaism. Then after the Church's expansion Christian Jews might be called Jewish Christians. In this case the Christian Jews were distinguished from other Christians who were not Jews - a racial differentiation. Where and when there was need neither for religious nor ethnic differentiation, Christian believers would be simply called Christians. This differentiation is meaningful in the inquiry into the development and transition of the early Church's gospel traditions during the period from the Jesus-movement up to ca. A.D.65.

of considering and differentiating the various historical phases of the ancient view, Johannine type, of the gospel-life or gospel-story both of Jesus and of the early Christian believers<sup>1</sup> in the development and transformation of the early Christian movement. The life of Jesus, the life of individual Christians and the life of Christian communities among others, therefore, are the essential components which are constitutive of the early Church's gospel traditions.

These then are the constitutive elements of a present day Christian's view of the Christian gospel:

- (a) the ancient view, Johannine type A, of the gospel-story of the life of Jesus - the classic and normative type of a Christian life.
- (b) the ancient view, Johannine type B, of the gospel-story of the early Christian believers - the distinct but derivative type or representative cases of the life of individual Christians and of Christian communities.
- (c) the modern view, contemporary type A, sc. contemporary interpretation and understanding of the ancient view, Johannine type A, of the gospel-story of the life of Jesus.

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1. The Christian gospel-life or gospel-story of the early Christian believers is the life story of some distinctive characters and of a Christian community as a whole.



- (d) the modern view, contemporary type B, sc. contemporary interpretation and understanding of the ancient view, Johannine type B, of the gospel-story of the early Christian believers and communities.
- (e) the modern view, contemporary type C, sc. contemporary interpretation and understanding of the contemporary gospel-stories of the life of contemporary Christians and Christian communities.<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing observation can be true only when there exists some kind of historical, religious and theological continuity between these various views of the Christian gospel traditions, sc. a present day Christian's view, the Fourth evangelist's view, the view of the Jewish Christians and of the Christian Jews. However, the continuity has not always been unbroken. There may be progress or decline, new creation or aberration. This will have to be considered separately in different contexts. The creativity of Jesus, of the Fourth evangelist, of the early Christian believers and of our contemporaries will, therefore, be considered later in our second chapter.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The phrase 'contemporary gospel-stories' is used in a very broad sense to subsume current Christian testimonies, reports, preaching, teaching, exhortation, etc. We have not mentioned the kaleidoscopic views which have come and gone between the early Churches and our time, by reason of the necessity for pragmatic delimitation of the field of inquiry. The present discourse presupposes two sources of man's personal knowledge; his acquaintance with the existing traditions and with his understanding of current human experiences.

2. Chapter II, pp.87-90, 130-160.

Thus far, our observation is based upon or presupposes an understanding that Jesus' history and theology are, historically and theologically speaking, the ultimate basis<sup>1</sup> of our contemporary Christian's construction and reconstruction<sup>2</sup> of the Christian gospel traditions and of the Christian gospel.

In fact, this standpoint contends that our contemporary Christian's view of Jesus' life, thought and aspiration, religion and theology - in short, of Jesus himself - is religiously and theologically the ultimate controlling element in a construction and reconstruction of our contemporary Christian's view of Christian belief, life and vocation in the world today, ultimate at the time and within the system of the construction.<sup>3</sup>

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1. It is ultimate with respect to the historical and theological origin and source, norm and identity of the Christian believing-understanding of the Christian gospel-story. Later in our chapter III we shall consider the question in what sense, again historically and theologically, not only the historical Jesus but also the living Jesus, i.e. the believing-understanding of the incarnated-crucified-risen Jesus, is the ultimate basis, sc. the origin, source, norm and identity, of Christian belief and worship, Christian life and work, and Christian hope and vision.

2. It is our contemporary Christian's construction and reconstruction, because what has been constructed by a contemporary Christian is a reconstruction based upon the Fourth evangelist's construction of the Christian gospel, which is in turn a reconstruction based upon the earlier Christian gospel traditions as well as upon various other sources, such as historical, philosophical, moral and religious materials or data - in short, the cultural conditions of the life and thought of the evangelist's time in general.

3. This is another way of saying that Christian anthropology, i.e. the Christian doctrine of man or discipleship, is ultimately qualified and conditioned by Christian messianology, i.e. the Christian believing-understanding of the man Jesus, his life, thought and aspiration.



In effect, what has been contended is that our contemporary Christian's view of Jesus' life, thought and aspirations is the ultimate presupposition<sup>1</sup> which forms the basis of, in other words authenticates or falsifies, the truth and value, the aspiration and vision, of Christian thinking and talking, reasoning and argument, testimony and confession, in all realms, areas and fields of human life, work and cultural activities. This is to say that, within the system which is based upon that contention, Christian assertions will be intelligible and at the same time can be justified and verifiable.<sup>2</sup>

However - and here lies the intricate problem - how should one analyse and synthesize the manifold layers and the kaleidoscopic modes of the interpreted and constructed, re-interpreted and reconstructed Christian gospel traditions over so many centuries by so many generations in so many places? This problem, in turn, raises a further problem, that of how one should come to terms with the numerous conditions which have to be fulfilled in the actual operation of interpretation and communication: the numerous conditions in the actual operation of historical, philosophical and theological thinking and reflection on the early Church's gospel traditions and on the actual ongoing life and theological enterprise of the contemporary Christian Church.

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1. It is ultimate in so far as it is considered within the system of the present thesis, sc. within the confines or the horizons of the thought-world of the present writer.

2. v. H. G. Hubbeling, Language, Logic and Criterion; R. A. Evans, Intelligible and Responsible talk about God; V. A. Harvey, The Historian and the Believer; I. T. Ramsay, Models for Divine Activity; J. McIntyre, The Shape of Christology; B. Lonergan, Method in Theology, chap.13, "Systematics", especially on 'the function of Systematics' and 'closed options', pp.335-344.

Apparently some methodical delimitation is needed. Our standpoint in the study of Judaism and Christianity and of the origin, formation and development of the early Church's gospel traditions is that of the NT as a whole, the finished product as it is extant today. A present day Christian's view of the early Church's gospel traditions, the four canonical Gospels, and the whole NT and OT are the data of our study and reflection - the inherited historical, theological and religious bases.<sup>1</sup> To these inherited bases should be added a present day Christian's view of the reality of human experience in general and the reality of his own experience of Christian belief and life in particular - the presently generated and currently generating historical, theological and religious bases.

Our preliminary definition of Christian belief consists of man's belief in the ever-living God and the living Jesus.<sup>2</sup> This is a Christian categorical or confessional statement - Christian rubric or ultimate presupposition.<sup>3</sup> Our preliminary definition of Christian life is a life qualified and conditioned by this God and Jesus in whom Christians believe and whom they worship. The phrase 'the reality of human experience' gives expression to a general

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1. The position, orientation and attitude the thesis holds towards these inherited religious books and the early Church's gospel traditions, we shall consider in the second chapter of the present thesis.

2. v. below, pp. 34f., 100ff.

3. The believing-understanding of this Christian compound belief, belief in God and in Jesus, represents the limiting case within the system of the present theological discourse. In this sense this compound belief can be called the 'absolute presupposition', absolute within the system of the present thesis. For fuller discussion on the subject of absolute presupposition, see R. G. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics, pp.31-33. We shall meet this notion 'absolute presupposition' again, with discussion, below pp.71-80.



acceptance, i.e. positive affirmation and critical appreciation, of the ongoing life of living human generations, the world and human culture.

Both the inherited and the presently generated and currently generating historical and religious bases, therefore, will constitute the data and ground upon which, and the horizon or boundary and perspective within which our historical, philosophical and theological inquiries will operate.

It is evident by now, that an interpreter of the Fourth Gospel has to face the problem of the correlation between human experience of the world in a past which extends to the present and current human experience of the world. These past events, then, consist of those interpreted experiences of the OT authors, Jesus, the Fourth Evangelist, our predecessors and our contemporaries up until the present. These events are naturally the ones selected by them, and we cannot claim that we know what they have not allowed us to know. Their interpretations of these events partly merge with each other, and contribute to our understanding and interpretation of our experiences. In concrete terms, an interpreter and communicator of the Fourth Gospel has to consider not only gospel-events that took place twenty centuries ago in Palestine but also those that took place before Jesus' life-time<sup>1</sup> and those which have taken place

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1. The gospel-events that took place before Jesus' time are naturally the gospel of God, sc. the OT gospel-stories.

since Jesus' time, and those which are still taking place every day.<sup>1</sup>

That is to say that, in the interpretation and communication of the Fourth Gospel, it is essential to take into account both past and present Christians' belief in God and in Jesus and past and present Christians' understanding of their belief in God and in Jesus and of mankind, world and culture.

1. This historical, philosophical and theological awareness of the correlation between past events and current events raises the issue of the correlation between human experience of ordinary event and the understanding of it as Christian gospel-event. Here we are differentiating between human experience and reported events or stories about the human experience. In the context of Christian religion human experience is interpreted or understood from the viewpoint of the Christian theistic world-view and salvation-history. Thus reported human experience can become Christian gospel-event or gospel-story. But not all human experiences are understood and interpreted in this way. Some human experiences are just beyond our comprehension. Some events are selected and interpreted, but some not. There is bound to be a selection; we merely raise the question in passing. Our point here is that, in so far as there exist living human generations, the world and human cultures, and in so far as their life, history and culture are conceived as an ongoing process, then mankind has to describe and explain these experiences, whether individual or corporate. Further, inasmuch as these human experiences can be interpreted and understood by Christians from the standpoint of the Christian theistic world-view and within the perspective of God's salvation-history, then humanly speaking, Christians can claim that the Christian gospel-story will continue to be told and retold and valued in this ongoing world since the Christian theistic world-view prevails and is cherished. What B. J. F. Lonergan says about 'common meaning' is relevant here. He says, "..... meaning is common in the measure that community exists and functions, in the measure that there is a common field of experience, common and complementary understanding, common judgements or at least an agreement to disagree, common and complementary commitments." Method in Theology, p.178. Further, on what humanity has been doing and the God that has been their concern, Lonergan has this to say, "But God comes within the world mediated by meaning in far more common ways. One's fundamental concern springs from God's gift of his love, but one's questions begin from the world and from man. Above all, in a religion that is shared by many, that enters into and transforms cultures, that extends down the ages, God will be named, questions about him will be asked, answers will be forthcoming. In still another manner God becomes an object in the very precise sense of what is intended in questions and known by correct answers.", Ibid., p.342.



He may also have to take into account our contemporary religious and theological situation (in the wider sense of the term): theology - how to think and talk about the Christian God; christology - how to think and talk about the Christian Jesus or the Christ of faith; anthropology - how to think and talk about mankind in general and Jesus the man in particular; and cosmology - how to think and talk about world-views in general and the Christian world-views in particular.

However, we shall here confine ourselves to discussing present day atheism within the context of Judaism and Christianity or within the thought world of Judaeo-Christian belief in God and in Jesus. In other words, within the confines of the biblical conceptual structure. We do this for two reasons; because these two monotheistic religions are directly relevant to our interpretation of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel and because present day atheism is a revolt against Christian theism, hence against Jewish theism.<sup>1</sup>

Today both Christians and Jews are fully aware of the fact that they live in the same world, a world in which theistic believing-understanding of the world and its relevance to the modern way of life and thinking as a whole are on the wane. In effect, theistic world-views are becoming obsolete.

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1. Other theistic systems are not considered here for reasons of pragmatic delimitation.

Helmut Gollwitzer says, "Modern atheism differs from that of the ancient world in that it is not a demythologizing interpretation of the traditional religion, but is a revolt against Christian theism and has understood itself as such from the start."<sup>1</sup> Douglas Templeton in this regard also says, "Atheism is no new phenomenon, but the 'atheist theologian' is. And the atheist theologian has been called into being by the death of God, obsequies celebrated not alone by a group, like the sophists, but a civilization. This is the differential mark which gives our own historical situation its peculiar character."<sup>2</sup>

The peculiar character of present day atheism, therefore, reveals the weakness and deficiency of the traditional Christian and Jewish assertions of the existence of the ever-living God. The question at issue, as we see it, for both Christian and Jewish theology (in the narrower sense of the term) is how to think and talk about the God of the past, the present and the future, i.e. the ever-living God, in relation to men and women of all generations.

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1. H. Gollwitzer, The Existence of God, Eng. tr., p.44.

2. D. Templeton, A critique of some aspects of kerygma as understood by Rudolf Bultmann and Charles Harold Dodd, unpublished doctoral thesis, Glasgow University, p.20.



In addition to this, Christian theology (in the wider sense of the term)<sup>1</sup> has to surmount yet another hurdle - how to think and talk about Jesus of Nazareth, a historical figure, in relation to his contemporaries and to God almost twenty centuries ago in Palestine and to ensuing Christian generations, and about the crucified and risen Jesus, who was, is and will be, in relation to mankind of all the post-Easter generations and to God.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Christian theology (in the wider sense of the term or in the narrower sense of the term): an abbreviated form 'wider sense' for 'in the wider sense of the term' and 'narrower sense' for 'in the narrower sense of the term' will be used hereafter.

2. C. F. D. Moule, The Origin of Christology. In reply to C. F. D. Moule's further comment on H. Willmer's comment on C. F. D. Moule's discussion of the distinctiveness of Christ, H. Willmer has this to say, "... I think that ... you want to look at the history of Jesus Christ to find out about God and his relation to the divided religious history of mankind." "... Then what happens in the history after the resurrection is important ..." "Especially if an historical event is God's final or inclusive act, one cannot ignore what happens after it. If Jesus is alive, then we should be able to interpret our history as having him as an actor - at least in principle ... So, the relation between Jesus and the Church (disciple, missionary, theologian, Christianity and Christianity's relation with other religions) is not only:

1. Jesus as achieved transcendence: to be proclaimed by those who have not achieved transcendence (unlikeness of Jesus and disciples); but also
2. Jesus as the process of transcendence, both as actor and recipient, so not only the Truth, but the Way and the Life to be shared by the disciple (likeness of Jesus and disciple).

Thus, we do not need to ignore the later history in order to talk of inclusiveness in him; his inclusiveness was always only of the disputing kind. We can never approach a Christian theology of other religions as though there is anywhere a possibility of getting beyond dispute: there is only the way of disputing creatively and recreatively rather than destructively." pp.167-171.

It is one thing to assert that God and Jesus merely lived twenty centuries ago and not thereafter.<sup>1</sup> It is quite another to assert that God and Jesus lived twenty centuries ago and that they have lived ever since, and further that they will continue to live in the future. It is true that ensuing Christian generations that hold this faith-standpoint have borne witness to the impact and influence they have experienced with this God and Jesus. Apparently, the horizon of this faith-standpoint is much more extensive than that of any other standpoint which does not hold this Christian compound belief - belief in the living God and in the crucified-risen Jesus.

One cannot minimise the grand contributions the historical criticism school has rendered up to date to the study of the written Gospels and the early Church's oral gospel traditions. However, there is a distinct Achilles' heel in the historical method and approach, especially when the assertion that the historical Jesus

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1. A theology (wider sense) constructed upon this basis cannot fruitfully discuss the faith that believes both in the ever-living God who is contemporaneous with all living generations, and in the crucified-risen Jesus, the living saviour, who is contemporaneous with all post-Easter generations. (Our preliminary definition of salvation is deliverance from sin and death and the positive gift to believers of better and more authentic life). Certainly, the God and the Jesus who lived in the past and not thereafter had great impact and influence upon the Jews during Jesus' life time and after his death. However, the best result this type of theology can expect is to heighten the impact and influence, through idealising and/or divinising, of the character of the historical figure, Jesus.



came alive again, remained and remains alive in the contemporary scene of ensuing Christian generations is made by Christians purely on the ground of historical knowledge obtained by historical inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

Further, there is a distinct Achilles' heel also in the theological method and approach, especially when the Christian assertion that Jesus was raised from the dead and has lived ever since is based purely on the ground of the knowledge of the Christian belief in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. For this knowledge could be the result of induction of or deduction from the dogmatic claim of the ultimate presupposition or the doctrinal affirmation of the belief that the Christian God, who is the ever-living God and the source of life, is he who raised the crucified Jesus. Is this a corollary of a critical reflection on what the ultimate presupposition of Christian theology is about?<sup>2</sup>

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1. V. A. Harvey, The Historian and the Believer, and his discussion of the morality of historical knowledge and of the limits of historical assertion, especially on the problem of the dilemma of "hard perspectivism".

2. This is the bankruptcy of idealistic metaphysics or of abstracted metaphysics.

A partial answer to the question raised here is attempted on pp.68-84 of this chapter.

Is the Christian assertion that God raised Jesus from the dead and that the risen Jesus has lived ever since basically and essentially a theological assertion (wider sense)? If the answer to the question is affirmative, then it is basically and essentially a compound of Christian theological (narrower sense), Christian messianological and anthropological assertion and confession, i.e. Christian testimony to the Christian believing-understanding of God, Jesus and Christians themselves.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that data for the history and theology of Jesus of Nazareth are scanty, but there is enough evidence in the NT for a historian or a theologian, or even a Christian who is both historian and theologian, to use as a basis and assert that Jesus lived and that he pioneered a movement which later became the Christian movement, even though the historical and theological knowledge he can acquire is no more, though no less, than an approximation to the historical and/or theological reality in question, sc. the history and theology of Jesus and of the early Church. A historian or a theologian, or even a Christian who is both historian and theologian, can assert on the basis of the NT witnesses that God and Jesus lived in the past. He can illustrate on the basis of the witnesses of the NT and Church history the impact and influence God and Jesus have

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1. Cf. H. Anderson and W. Barclay (ed.), The New Testament in Historical and Contemporary Perspective, the article on 'The Easter Witness of the Evangelists', pp.35-55, by H. Anderson; F. V. Filson, The New Testament against its Environment, on the discussion of the Gospel of Christ the Risen Lord. Here we are asserting the horizon of Christian metaphysical theology and raising the issue of the limitation both of the historical and theological methods and of knowledge obtained by those methods in our inquiry into the content of the Christian gospel-story - a gospel-story which consists of God, Jesus, mankind, the world, culture and the inter-relation of these to each other.



exercised upon mankind since the first day of the early Church up to the present of our contemporary Church. Nevertheless, in order to assert that the NT God and Jesus are alive and are exercising influence still upon men and women today as, too, they will in the future, some further insights into the limitations of historical, theological and philosophical method and approach need to be considered.

There may be a survival or revival of thought at different times and in different persons according to Collingwood's first principle of a philosophy of history, "that the past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present".<sup>1</sup> Further, "... historical knowledge is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying".<sup>2</sup> Along the lines Collingwood has laid down, what survives or revives does survive and revive in the historian's, theologian's or the Christian's thought-world - in short in the human thought-world. What is re-enacted is re-enacted in the historian's, the theologian's or the Christian's mind - in short in the human mind. But what the Christian belief asserts is not merely the reality of human mind, thought or idea, not merely the reality of what we might call vitalizing energy, will-power, or a metaphysical guiding principle, but the reality of the experience of the realised

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1. R.G. Collingwood, An Autobiography, p.97. On the act of thought itself in its survival and revival at different times and in different persons, see also his The Idea of History, p.303.

2. R. G. Collingwood, An Autobiography, p.112.

content and power of Christian belief and hope of a living man and woman within communities.

This experience is a compound whole composed of those experienced subjective realities and the objective reality of the crucified and risen Jesus, who is the living Jesus today.<sup>1</sup>

This belief, which asserts the objective reality that the crucified Jesus was raised and that the crucified-risen Jesus has lived ever since, in effect asserts also that this living Jesus is and can be contemporaneous with all successive post-Easter generations. Further, this faith-assertion implies that he who asserts this belief is challenged and actuated to commit himself not only to Jesus' past, i.e. both to what Jesus said and did, and to who he was, but also, and more significantly, to commit himself to the contemporaneous Jesus, i.e. both to what he is saying and doing and to who he is among modern contemporaries in reminding them of their common origin, heritage and identity - their past, in exposing their present

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1. In what sense Christian subjective experience, sc. human subjectivity, is real and reliable, and in what sense the objective reality, sc. spiritual objectivity, of the crucified-risen Jesus is real and reliable - these two questions are basic issues that have to be considered before Christian theology (wider sense) can intelligibly and reasonably affirm the reality of the correlation between human subjective reality and divine spiritual objective reality. On this issue see further discussion in our third chapter, pp.201-211. However, at this juncture some implications of the issue in question can be stated. Christian subjective experience pertains to the issue of Christian anthropology, and the objectivity of the crucified-risen Jesus pertains to the issue of Christian messianology and theology (narrower sense). Christian messianology then is concerned with the issue of the inextricable compound of Christian theology and anthropology, sc. the inextricable compound of the human and the divine (to use somewhat Chalcedonian terminology).



state and situation, and in leading the whole of mankind into the emerging present and the looked-for future. Such is the NT belief, Johannine belief and Christian conviction.

Mutatis mutandis, the Christian belief which asserts that the one who raised the crucified Jesus from the dead is the ever-living God, has the same constitutive effects and implications for Christian individuals and communities, sc. that this God is and can be contemporaneous with all generations before and after Jesus, and that he who asserts this belief has to commit himself to this God, who was, is and will be - a compound of Jewish and Christian beliefs or a compound of the OT and the NT beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

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1. A sensitive critic will want to know the answer to the question, what it is that distinguished Christian belief from Jewish belief or NT belief from OT belief and what it is that unites them? It is the identifiable power and act of the ever-living God to raise the dead together with the identifiable historical figure of the Christian Messiah Jesus on the one hand, and on the other the Jewish, yet to be identified, power and act of the ever-living God to raise the dead together with the, yet to be identified, Jewish expected messiah that marks the divide between Christian or NT belief and Jewish or OT belief, and also marks the divide between the different standpoint upon which the Christians interpret the OT scripture.

What combines, compounds and unites Christian OT theology and NT theology (wider sense) is the Christian peculiar believing-understanding or interpretation of the identifiable power and act of the ever-living God to raise the dead and of the identifiable Christian Messiah Jesus, the crucified-risen Jesus, and of the identifiable Christian commitment to this God, this Jesus and fellow men and women in the world. This means that Christians did not eliminate the Jewish and OT belief, but by inheriting it took it over and complemented it. In this sense OT and NT beliefs form a successive and related but qualitatively different theological, christological and anthropological outlook and inner character.

Hence the above statement - that present day atheism reveals the weakness and the deficiency of the traditional assertion of the existence of the ever-living God - has to be modified thus: present day atheism reveals the weakness and the deficiency of traditional assertions about the contemporary living God, the contemporary living Jesus and the individual and communal living testimony of contemporary Christians.

The key-issue, in our opinion, is twofold:

- (a) the reality of the living God, the living Jesus and living mankind, and
- (b) the reality of the contemporaneity of this God and this Jesus with respective human generations.

However, the attention of Christian theology has been centred upon the inquiry and explanation of the issue (b), which is based upon or presupposes, the issue (a).

Indeed, it is not difficult to see that this key issue has dominated the scene since Christian theology (wider sense) emerged. For the issue is as old as the early Church's confession or the NT belief that Jesus was risen. And ever since, it has been the real and lively issue within believing communities everywhere. It is the same issue that goes with and constantly shadows the proclamation of the good news for mankind that Jesus was risen from the dead and that it is the 'Judaeo-Christian' living God who raised Jesus from the dead. As a matter of fact, this issue of the contemporaneous living God is as old as the Jewish confession. It is the issue implicit in the OT belief that God is the creator and that he is the Lord of history.



Current discussion on the contemporaneity of the Bible, the word of God, or of the biblical message,<sup>1</sup> on the contemporaneity of Jesus Christ or of the risen Jesus,<sup>2</sup> on the indigenization of the Christian gospel,<sup>3</sup> and on the incarnation of the Christian gospel<sup>4</sup> - all these are essentially discussion of the historical and theological relevance to modern contemporaries, who live and work, think and talk in the contemporary cultural setting, of the biblical God and/or the word of God, of the crucified-risen Jesus and of the

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1. The article by Bernhard W. Anderson. The Contemporaneity of the Bible, in the Princeton Seminary Bulletin, vol. LXII, Num. 2, Summer, 1969, pp.38-50, has a full range of discussion on these points.

2. v. e.g., R. Bultmann, "The relation of the early Christian message of Christ to the historical Jesus", unpublished English translation by R. G. Smith, especially on the discussion of the Easter faith that Jesus Christ is present in the kerygma. For a published English translation see C. E. Braaten and R. A. Harrisville (eds.), The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, chap.1, "The primitive Christian kerygma and the historical Jesus", pp.15-42, especially pp.40-42.

3. The question discussed in the indigenization of the Christian gospel is: how can the Christian gospel message be transferred from one cultural setting to another? This is still a burning issue in most of the younger Churches wherever the preaching of the Christian gospel to fellow men and women is the central concern of the Church. This particular interest is manifestly keen when and where historical and theological consciousness is sharp among missionaries and native Christians.

4. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, which considers the problem of indigenization of the Christian gospel, is concerned with the question, how to make the Christian gospel incarnate in Taiwan today. For they see that in crossing the border from one cultural milieu to another the gospel must 'assume new flesh'. It loses the cultural expression which it has found, and it has to be conceived and articulated in a new way. It becomes a living embodiment or concretely realises itself in the life and work of Christian believers daily.

biblical message or the Christian gospel message. The issue, therefore, pertains to the intricate correlation between or the inextricable compound of history, philosophy, and theology (wider sense).

In other words, the crux of the problem of Christian theology today resides in the question of how to authenticate, verify and validate the truth of this assertion: the Christian God, hence the Jewish God, is the ever-living God; the Christian Jesus is the crucified-risen and the ever-living Jesus; and further, every person has to do with or is answerable to this God, this Jesus and one's contemporaries. This is the question with which historians, philosophers and theologians have to wrestle.

The question may be asked in terms of the correlation between the origin of a Christian, his existence and the process of his being and becoming or in terms of the onward march towards human destiny. How can an individual Christian become or be what he believes and understands he should become or be? How can a Christian community become or be what it believes and understands it should become and be? How can an individual Christian or a Christian community live such a life as he or it believes and understands he or it ought to live and why - in short, how to become and be or, vice versa, i.e. how to be and become an authentic living person and community in the contemporary world. This is a religious, and at the same time, a real life issue, the issue of the inextricable compound of 'origin' and 'destiny' and of 'being' and 'becoming' -  
the  
the issue of/philosophy and theology of the life and history of mankind.

The Christian religion substantially involves three facets.

The first facet is man's personal commitment and dedication to his own life and work and that of the community in which he finds himself. This is man's relation to himself and to his fellow men.

The second facet is man's belief in God and in Jesus and his personal submission and dedication to or orientation towards the God and the Jesus in whom he trusts and whom he worships. Here God and Jesus are the objects of worship. Man's relation to God, Jesus and himself is the content of his religious confession.

Both in the first and the second facet we consider the personal experience and relation between man and man, between man, God and Jesus from the point of view of man himself. However, God and Jesus both also disclose<sup>1</sup> themselves as individual subjects and living agents who are involved in their mutual fellowship and in their personal fellowship with men and women. For the fellowship between man and man, and between man, God and Jesus is intrinsically and always a reciprocal, inter-personal relation, although it may and can be distorted and de-personalised.

The third facet consists of man's philosophical experience, i.e. his understanding, and assertion of historical, philosophical and theological truth together with the value of Christian religious belief

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1. This statement is made on the basis of Christian belief in the revelation of God, which is outside the scope of the present study. However, see the critical discussion on the revelation model in christology in John McIntyre, The Shape of Christology, pp.114-171. Cf. also I. T. Ramsey, Models for Divine Activity, on the discussion of 'cosmic disclosure' and 'disclosure-commitment situation', a situation in human daily experience which gives rise to religious insight and commitment. It is the situation in which God's activity and man's activity meet. cf. N. Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered.



and practice. The truth and the value are those to which he commits himself and which he personally observes in private and community life. Here we deal directly with a Christian's witnessing believing-understanding of the historical, philosophical and theological truth and value of the Christian religion. In this facet we think and talk about man's relation to philosophical thoughts, ideas and insights, which are practically and substantially the expressed thoughts, ideas and insights of the historical, philosophical and theological truth and value of Christian belief and practice. Hence we are moving within a thought-world which is a compound of private and public thought-worlds, a world mediated by historical, philosophical and theological truth or meaning, and motivated or regulated by historical, philosophical and theological value. This thought-world, therefore, is a metaphysical world mediated by and based upon the meaning which has emerged from one's truth-value judgement and/or from one's witnessing-believing-understanding of one's presuppositions, ultimate presuppositions, ultimate concern or the God and Jesus in whom one trusts and whom one worships.

If this observation is meaningful, then we may go on to assert that the content or the substance of the subject-matter of Christian theology consists of

- (a) human experience of God, Jesus, fellow-men and women in the contemporary world,
- (b) God's experience of Jesus, mankind and God himself and
- (c) Jesus' experience of God, fellow-men and women and Jesus himself.



If we express these experiences in terms of personal relations, they can be articulated as a present, living, personal relational happening<sup>1</sup> between man, God and Jesus in the world, mediated by human cultural consciousness and intention.

The foregoing theological discourse is intelligible inasmuch as we accept the Christian belief in the existence of the living God and Jesus. Further, we may be able to authenticate Christian thinking and talking about the invisible God and the crucified-risen Jesus as divine person, divine personal being or divine spiritual personal being inasmuch as we assume the lucidity and validity of an ontologically structured metaphysical system of Christian discourse.<sup>2</sup>

If a divine spiritual personal being is distinct from a human spiritual personal being, what are the differentiae between the divine being and human being? If our understanding of human personal being is a markedly distinctive, identifiable, individual whole consisting of physical, intellectual, rational and responsible aspects of life and activity, then by an analogy of person a Christian's believing-understanding of the divine personal being will be a markedly distinctive, identifiable, individual whole consisting not of physical, intellectual, rational and responsible aspects, but of intellectual, rational and responsible aspects of life and activity. This is the image of God of biblical anthropomorphism. The physical aspect has been eliminated. In other words,

1. This notion 'present, living, personal, relational happening' will be considered on pp. 59-61, below.

2. For further discussion on an ontologically structured metaphysical system of Christian discourse, see Chapter III, below.

the biblical image of God is philosophically and theologically refined.

In the Fourth Gospel, the Christian God is Spirit, i.e. a spiritual being (4.24) and the living Father (6.57), the Father who is the source of life (5.26) and who raises the dead (5.21). The Christian Jesus is the resurrection and the life (11.25). He also has the power to raise the dead (5.21) and is the source of life (1.4; 5.26). If human talk of a divine spiritual personal being is God-talk moulded on the analogy, image or symbol of person, and if God is a distinct, identifiable, individual whole, who is both intelligible and intelligent being, (here I hasten to add that it is an affirmation made within the confine of the thought-world of an ontologically structured metaphysical system of Christian theological discourse), it follows that this God and this crucified-risen Jesus can be known by believers, i.e. they can be understood by human intelligence, affirmed by human reason and intelligibly communicated both to believers and those who accept Christian fundamental beliefs as absolute presuppositions.

In this and only in this qualified sense, Christians can claim that, unless present day Christians can show or communicate in deeds and words to their fellow men and women what the Christian faith-assertions are, on the one hand, about the contemporaneous living spiritual personal beings, God and Jesus, and,

on the other, about their contemporary living fellow Christians, their predecessors or forerunners, and the universe, (as a whole, in its totality, as we mortal beings can perceive, apprehend and appreciate it, i.e. including nature and all cultures), as both the creation of God through Jesus and as the sphere within which the personal and inter-personal encounter, interaction, communication and communion take place between God, Jesus, all creatures and all created things, then their fellow non-Christians will not be able to come, see and understand either the reality and significance of the Christian way of life or Christian theological discourse, not to mention Christian confessions, creeds, worship, liturgy and theological presuppositions.

If the foregoing argument can be considered meaningful, i.e. if every Christian generation has to live out or to implement personally and concretely their believing-understanding of the present living personal correlation between the contemporaneous living God, the contemporaneous living Jesus and living contemporaries in their contemporary world (which means within the perspectives or contexts and horizons of their contemporary culture and not in a world other than this world in which mankind lives), then Christianity can properly be called a religion and/or a philosophy of life<sup>1</sup> based upon Christian doctrinal confessions and religious practices.

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1. By a philosophy of life I mean the wisdom or knowledge which deals with the principles or basic stances of human life. It pertains to human believing-understanding of mankind and human living.



However, Christian doctrinal confessions and religious practices are in turn based upon and conditioned by Christians' witnessing-believing-understanding of God, Jesus, mankind and the world. In fact, the reciprocation or correlation between

- (a) Christian doctrinal confession,
- (b) Christians' religious practice, and
- (c) Christians' witnessing-believing-understanding  
of God, Jesus, mankind, the world, culture,

is one issue that has to be investigated and explained further.

2. The correlation between the three basic chronological dimensions, the past, the present and the future, of the thought-world of Isaiah, Jesus, the evangelist and a present day Christian.

We shall first consider the present day Christian view of man, sc. a living agent, in history. The Christian religion, as we understand it, as a religion and/or a philosophy of life, pertains to Christian testimony to Christian belief and life. This Christian testimony pertains to Christian knowledge, which is always believing-understanding, and to Christian living, which is in accord with that knowledge. Hence our knowledge of Christian belief and life is the fruit of our inquiry both into Christian traditions and into our own contemporary Christian living.

The issues involved in Christian traditions pertain to the relation

between the past and the present Christian witnessing-believing-understanding<sup>1</sup> of the Christian gospel. Those traditions are the ones contained within the extant records of Christian testimonies to the Christian gospel up to the present, such as the four canonical Gospels, the Christian Bible and works of Christian theology, art, etc., ancient and modern.

The issues involved in Christian living today pertain to the decision, commitment and action taken by Christians in proportion to their witnessing-believing-understanding of the glory of God and of Jesus, of the present and future welfare of the world and the well-being of mankind, both of individuals and as a whole.

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1. The compound word 'witnessing-believing-understanding' is employed to express the reality of the compound character of Christian life as a living witness that bears testimony, positive or negative, by means of words and deeds, life and death, to the Christian believing-understanding of the Christian gospel or gospel-event. This compound word stresses the fact that Christian living (life and activity in general) and Christian thinking (particular activity) about Christian living and thinking and about Christian thought (Christian understanding of Christian living and thinking, and of the formulated, expressed or even communicated content of Christian living, thinking and understanding as a whole, general and particular, etc.) - these are distinguishable but inseparable constituents of the Christian experience and the Christian gospel, sc. the information about that experience. In other words, the gospel-event (as happening) and informations about it (thought of a believed and understood gospel-event, and formulated, expressed, informed or communicated gospel-event) - these are distinguishable but inseparable. If the task of Christian theology is to explain both Christian experience and Christian thought (believing-understanding) about Christian experiences, doctrines and confessions, etc., these components, sc. witnessing-believing-understanding, inevitably coalesce and are correlated, and are thus inextricably inter-connected and insoluble in tension.

Christian living today, thus understood, is consequent on Christian collaboration with the aggregate of the accumulated knowledge both of the achievement, success and failure up to now, and of the confidence and uncertainty, hope and anxiety, expectation and fear of mankind in the looked-for future at each given time and region. For the actual life of mankind, how human beings feel, think, intend and act, is largely constituted

- (a) by the presently given conditions, including past experiences, personal and racial, national and international, and present understanding of their present state and environment, and
- (b) by an emerging situation, including the prospective knowledge and hope, aspiration and vision of the looked-for future of mankind.

In other words, man lives in the present. So long as a man is alive, his present status is that he has a part of his life-span already lived and another part of it as emerging present that awaits him, so that he may actualise the possibilities within him and through him. The former part, chronologically, pertains to his past; nevertheless, empirically and conceptually, it still lives in him and has effects on him.

It is true that, on the natural aspect of human existence, i.e. with respect to the existence of man as a natural man in contrast with a cultural man, man cannot live either in the past or in the future. Yet consciously or unconsciously, with respect to the cultural aspect of human existence, a man may live exclusively in



the past and/or in the future. This is either anachronism or fantasy. That a man lives in the present means that he lives in the emerging present. This is perfectly true of human natural existence, sc. human biological life and the physical experience of time. However, from the cultural aspect of life, man lives on deposits of the past and experiences, oblivion and oversight, etc., and on future prospects, what may come into being and what will be - aspirations, visions, hopes and plans, uncertainty, contingency and unpredictability, etc. Further, with respect to the religious aspect of human existence, man may live a life that is grounded upon his religious belief and practice, which may affirm or negate the common belief and/or the traditional practice of his contemporaries. Broadly speaking, our life, which has natural, cultural and religious aspects, is a complex or mixture of living in the emerging present, on deposits of the past and experience, on future prospects, and on religious belief. For there is no such state as a life lived completely in the present without a past or without future prospects, or exclusively on any one aspect or any two aspects without being involved in the other aspect or aspects of human existence.

Thus we will have to be involved in at least four different thought-worlds and three chronological phases of these four thought-worlds, the thought-worlds of the OT writers, of Jesus of Nazareth, of the Fourth evangelist and of our contemporaries. The first three are those of the past, from our standpoint, hence they are only imaginatively, conceptually and representatively real to us, but they were both existentially and conceptually real to the OT writers, Jesus and the evangelist respectively. The fourth, the thought-world

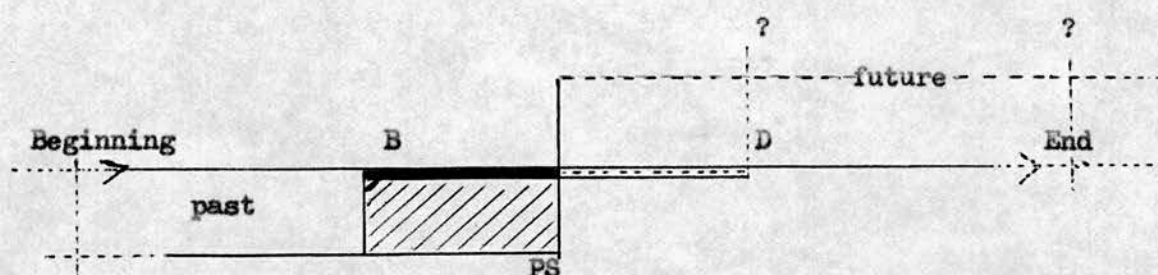
today, was still 'future' to the OT writers, Jesus and the evangelist toward which they in part looked prospectively, though it was for the most part unexpected or unknown to them, but it is both existentially and conceptually real to us.

Further, the content of the thought-world today includes our past, present and future. The awareness of this fact is important, and we must remind ourselves that every OT writer, as well as Jesus and the evangelist, had his own individual life and his own respective historical standpoints, just as every one of us has his own life and historical standpoint.

Since the correlation and inter-penetration or intermingling of these four thought-worlds and their three basic chronological dimensions have broad relevance to and immediate consequence for our two-fold task - the interpretation and communication of the Fourth Gospel, in particular, and the Christian gospel in general - we shall consider them further.

If we use, in diagram, a straight line to represent a linear concept of time and history in process and to delineate the individual history of a man thirty years old today, in relation to general world history, it will appear as in Figure 1.





B = Birth  
 PS = Present Standpoint  
 D = Death (prospectively)

Figure 1

B to D = a man's life-span  
 Beginning to End = a hypothetical life-span  
 of general world history

Figure 1 is quite simple. A man's life is from his birth to his death. His (own particular) past is from his birth to his present standpoint. His (own particular) future will be from his present standpoint to the prospective date of his death. However, since a living person is always on the move, his present standpoint is always on the move with the passage of time. Hence it cannot be static or fixed as the figure shows. This is a limitation of figurative illustration.

What has been said is true of human biological life or physical experience of time which is confined to the space-and-time continuum. But man's mental life or the world of knowledge which we call the thought-world is not necessarily confined to the world of human physical and immediate experience. It is true that human thinking-activity or an act of thought takes place here and now, but the content or object of thought can expand beyond the here and now.



For the thought-world is the "world mediated by meaning" and is larger than the "world of immediacy".<sup>1</sup>

It is perfectly true that we cannot be co-present with Isaiah of so many centuries ago, but we can think about what Isaiah thought, said or did when reading his writing. In other words, human mental experience of time and space can expand enormously as the science of history, to mention no other sciences, shows. Nevertheless, any exploration into history, sc. the past, or the looked-for future has to begin where we are and with what we are.

While one's personal empirical history is necessarily confined to one's life-span, one's thought-world expands to the past and future beyond one's birth and prospective death. In other words, man's thought-world can encompass the history of human culture and of world history inasmuch as he manages to learn and know. However, the explanation of the beginning and the end of world history varies depending on whether the view taken is scientific or religious. Here we may just point out in passing that Judaism and Christianity has its own particular protology and eschatology with their concomitant explanations.<sup>2</sup>

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1. These words "world mediated by meaning" and "world of immediacy" are B. Lonergan's. "This distinction between immediate and mediate operation has quite a broad relevance. It sets off the world of immediacy of the infant against the vastly larger world mediated by meaning. Further, it proves a basis for a distinction between lower and higher cultures." P.28 of his book, Method in theology, see also pp.76f., 89, 112f., 238, 257-263, 303.

2. The answers to the questions when and how the world began and will end are correlated with or historically conditioned by respective contemporary common views on history and culture, as the creation stories in Genesis chapters 1-3 show. However, the interpretation and communication of Genesis chapters 1-3 or how a contemporary Christian will reconstruct the Christian protology and eschatology of a contemporary Christian's theistic worldview, which is correlated with or conditioned by our contemporary common views on history and culture, are subjects outside the scope of the present thesis. Nevertheless, the point is that a personal history must have some kind of general world history as a reference frame in its presentation.

With this broad understanding of the relation between personal and world history, let us consider the histories of the prophet Isaiah, Jesus, the Fourth evangelist and a contemporary interpreter. If we use a linear concept of time and history to illustrate their correlations, it will appear as in Figure 2.

The PS of a man today is our real present standpoint. If we assume a beginning and an end point of world history, the past includes the period from the beginning to the PS and the future the period from the PS to the end of the world history. These four men's life-spans are illustrated in relation to the PS of the man today; perspectively, therefore, the further from the PS the smaller is the rectangle.

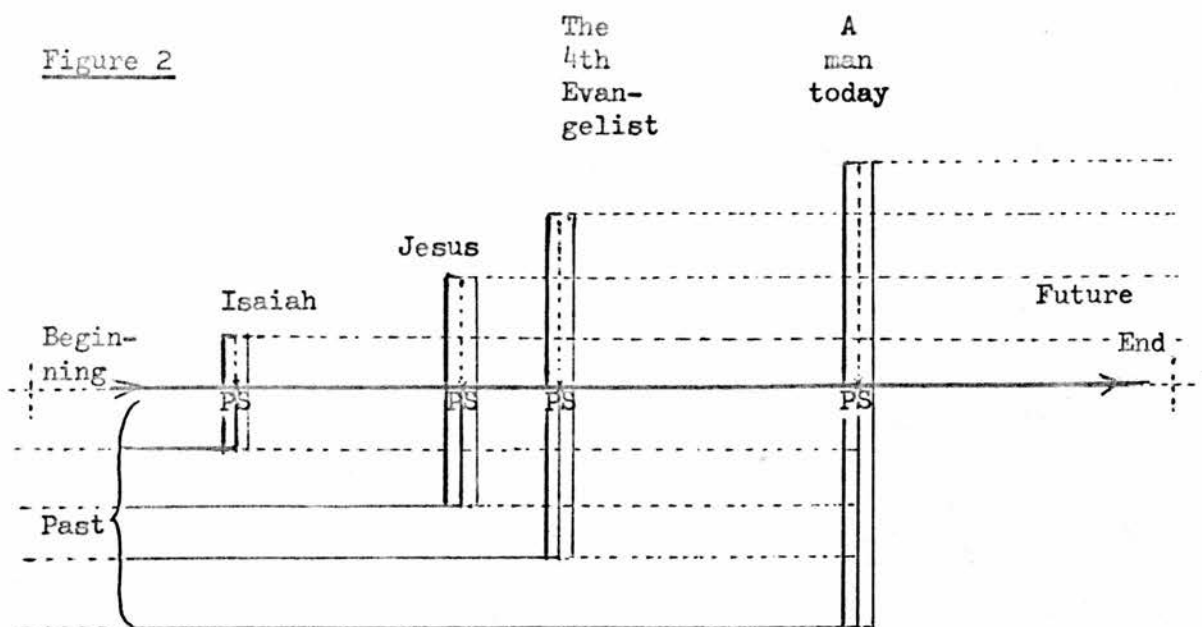
Two matters are noteworthy here.

- (1) The significance of a personal life within world history.
- (2) The complex correlation between the past, present and future of Isaiah, Jesus, the evangelist and a man today. Let us consider them in turn.

- (1) The significance of a personal life within world history.

Each man has his own past, present and future, represented by a vertical rectangle. Each man also shares a common past, present and future which overlap with each man's life-span. Thus the bottom part of the rectangle represents the overlapping of the past and the present. The top of it represents the overlapping of the present and the future. Thus each man's past and future are firmly fixed by his own real present standpoint at the time in question.

Figure 2



## Explanations:

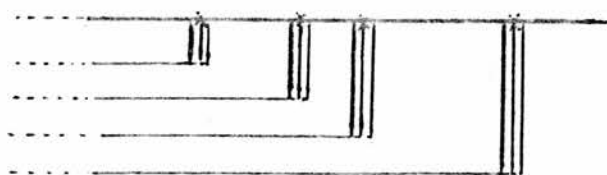
== The life-span of a man today

== The 4th Evangelist's life-span

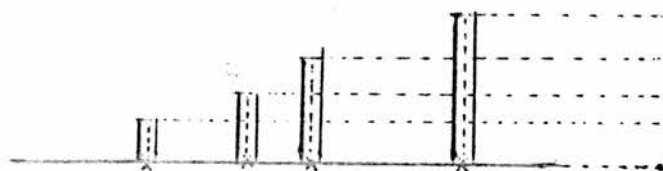
== Jesus' life-span

== Isaiah's life-span

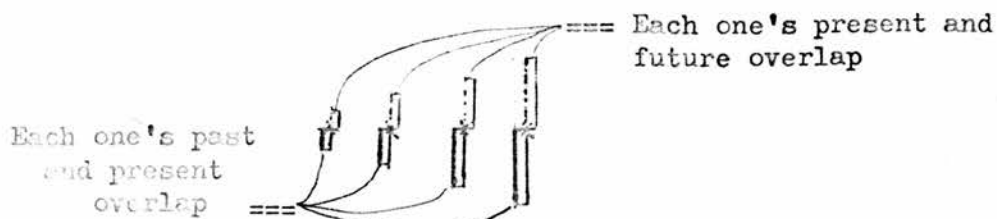
PS = Present Standpoint



=== Overlapping pasts



=== Overlapping futures



=== Each one's present and future overlap



However, we know that a man can assume a certain historical imaginary standpoint over and above his real present empirical standpoint, i.e. that a man can change his conceptual standpoint. This fact has immediate relevance to his historical and logical thinking and reasoning. It follows that when one thinks, reasons and talks about another's or one's own thought, whether this other person be a contemporary or someone in the past, the inter-relations of the past and future with the present change in accordance with the change in historical imaginary standpoint or with the shift in conceptual standpoint assumed by the thinker.

Take one example from the Fourth Gospel: the story of the cleansing of the Temple in 2.13-22 is narrated from two historical standpoints. It is perfectly true that all the NT Gospels were post-Easter productions. But within the story, the evangelist in vv.13-16, 18-20 assumed the standpoint of the time before the death of Jesus. Later in vv.21f. he assumed the early Christian standpoint, which was the time after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The relation between past, present and future, therefore, is considered as decisively fixed when the standpoint in question is a real-life present standpoint which cannot be changed at will; and as relatively determined when the standpoint in question is an imaginary or conceptual standpoint which can be changed at will within the range or horizon of the same system of theological discourse.

The foregoing discussion may help us to understand 1.15, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'" The point is that two kinds of standpoint, historical and theological, are employed in one sentence. Historically,

John the Baptist was born before Jesus, but theologically, because of the belief in the pre-existence of the divine Word, i.e. in a compound theological and historical account, and in the incarnate Word Jesus, i.e. in a compound theological-and-historical account, Jesus was believed to have existed before the Baptist, i.e. a compound theological-and-historical account. Hence the Baptist could say that Jesus was greater than he, i.e. a compound theological-and-historical account.

If, theologically speaking, divine presence or existence is a spiritual one, it is the sort of presence or existence which is not confined to the space-and-time continuum or to human and natural physical conditions. Nevertheless, the divine presence or existence is real in a spiritual sense. Now to a theist or a Christian believer, if the incarnation faith is accepted and affirmed, the belief in the pre-existent Jesus, or his present spiritual presence or existence, can be thought of as and believed to be 'real', and his divine spiritual presence or existence affirmed.

With this understanding, we turn to consider John 8.48-59, where the evangelist wrote that Jesus claimed to be contemporary with, as well as prior to Abraham (v.56). The immediate reaction of his contemporary Jews was, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" (v.57). Then Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." (v.58).

Naturally, the Christian belief in the pre-existence of the divine Word who was incarnated in Jesus is presupposed in this passage. It is explicitly affirmed in v.58. Here we have to think

in terms of two sets of standpoints -

- (i) the theological and the historical, and
  - (ii) the real and the imaginary.
- (a) For example: the evangelist assumed in thought the standpoint of Jesus' life time. To those who accepted the incarnation faith, both the divine, spiritual existence and presence and the historical, physical existence and presence of Jesus could be real, i.e. real both theologically and historically. But according to the evangelist's presentation or argument, to those Jews contemporary with Jesus who refused this faith-standpoint<sup>1</sup> only the historical existence and presence of Jesus could be real, and his divine, spiritual existence and presence not real. That is to say that he was real historically and physically but not theologically and spiritually.
- (b) The Jews then assumed the standpoint which was that of Abraham's life time, again according to the evangelist's presentation or argument. What the unbelieving Jews denied was the Christian theological (narrower sense) and messianological affirmation that the man Jesus was the pre-existent and incarnate Word of God. As a corollary of this denial (of the

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1. For the problematic character of this 'faith standpoint' in relation to a historical standpoint, see further discussion on pp. 51-54.



compound theological-and-anthropological affirmation), they denied the contemporaneity of Jesus of Nazareth with Abraham in Abraham's life-time (anthropologically, i.e. historically, impossible - hence it is rightly denied), together with the spiritual presence of the pre-existent divine Word (theologically, i.e. spiritually, possible - hence it is wrongly denied).

The evangelist and the ensuing Christian believers, therefore, can affirm retrospectively the spiritual contemporaneity of the pre-existent divine Word which was the pre-existent phase or state of Jesus of Nazareth, who was believed to be the incarnation, embodiment, of the divine Word. What the evangelist affirmed is, therefore, a theological existence and presence rather than a historical one.

We have considered two historical, real-life standpoints, that of Abraham and of Jesus. We have then considered John 8.48-59, its interpretation from the historical, real-life<sup>1</sup> standpoint of Jesus and from the historical, real-life standpoint of the evangelist. If we include the historical standpoint of the present day interpreter, and naturally this is our real-life historical standpoint,

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1. The historical standpoint of Jesus of Nazareth is always and necessarily the real-life historical standpoint. However, it is not so presented here, because it is qualified by the interpreter. In other words, it is the historical standpoint of Jesus assumed by the evangelist. It therefore cannot be his real-life historical standpoint. It is real to Jesus' life-time and Jesus himself but only conceptually real to the evangelist, the thinker and the interpreter. Further, we consciously acknowledge the time gap between the historical, real-life of Jesus and the testimony of the evangelist who wrote the Gospel and the implication of this time gap for the actual operation of the interpretation of the Gospel.



In other words, the Spirit of the pre-existent Word of God can be co-present with Abraham, and the Spirit of the risen Jesus can be co-present with the evangelist and with a present day Christian interpreter.

The evangelist confessed that the man Jesus of Nazareth, who once lived in Palestine in the first century A.D. and has lived ever since after his being 'lifted up', is the same crucified-risen Jesus and is the Christ, the Son of God, who pre-existed before his birth and even before the creation, i.e. the beginning of the world. Thus, the overall Gospel picture of the Christian Jesus, of the Johannine type, is the 'pre-existent-incarnated-crucified-risen-post-existent-living Jesus'.

Was this overall Gospel image or portrait of the Christian Jesus believed and presupposed by the evangelist in his presentation of the Gospel? Do we, as present day interpreters and communicators collaborating with Christian traditions, think, reason and talk as the evangelist did, as we accept and affirm this overall Gospel image of the Christian Jesus?

At this point we return to the problematic statement we made on page 48, 'But ... to those Jews ... who refused this faith-standpoint only the historical existence and presence of Jesus could be real .....'. This faith-standpoint is the belief in the pre-existence and incarnation of the divine Word in the Christian Jesus.

We note that the real situation in which this faith-standpoint occurred was not during Jesus' life time, but during the post-Easter



era. This insight is based upon our understanding of the evangelist's understanding that the Spirit, who is the supreme interpreter of and witness to the man Jesus, his history and thought, was not given to believers until he was glorified, i.e. crucified and raised (John 7.39).

But the historical context within which the narrative is given is a standpoint during Jesus' life-time, i.e. during his public ministry. We have to take into account the fact that the evangelist assumed or presupposed a standpoint which is a compound of theological and historical.<sup>1</sup> The question is, Was the evangelist here imposing something which was quite foreign to the Jews who were contemporary with Jesus?

Is it because of the way in which the history and thought of Jesus were presented in the form of a gospel-life or a gospel-story that theology and history, or theological and historical standpoints, are intricately compounded and fused in such a way that, without its being noticed, theology has overridden history? The evangelist, therefore, might have allowed the standpoint of the Jews who were contemporary with him to override the standpoint of the Jews who were contemporary with the historical Jesus. To be sure the theological or spiritual standpoint can be real and true at

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1. v. J. L. Martyn, History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel. Martyn discusses the two level drama, the einmalig level of Jesus' earthly ministry and the level of Jesus' powerful presence in actual events experienced by the Johannine Church, in the perspective of the evangelist's witness (pp.9f.). "... for his (the Evangelist's) major concern in this regard was to bear witness to the essential integrity of the einmalig drama of Jesus' earthly life and the contemporary drama in which the Risen Lord acts through his servants." (p.77). v. also O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle, pp.14, 15, 18.

any phase of world history to believers, because the divine spiritual presence cannot be confined to human physical and historical conditions. To put it positively, the divine spiritual being can be present or co-present with all living human generations.

Are these theological arguments, affirmations and/or confessions, such as the 'pre-existence of Jesus' before his birth and even before the creation of the world, or 'Christ' in the OT, necessary in our time? Do we still have to employ them as categories or pre-suppositions in the attempt to understand the OT, the overall Gospel image of the Christian Jesus or in the matter of the interpretation and communication of the Christian gospel? The kind of christo-centric OT theology or the kind of pre-existence and incarnation christology we have considered, sc. the one that overemphasises theology and violates history (anthropology), has to be questioned.

What we must aim at or seek for is a theological (wider sense) statement which is both theologically (narrower sense) and historically (anthropologically) true, because violation of the one is the violation of the other, if the theological statement must be compounded of both elements.

What we can affirm about the historical presence of Jesus of Nazareth is this: he was and can have been existentially real only to his contemporaries during his life time in Palestine. Historically speaking, Jesus of Nazareth cannot be said to have been contemporaneous with Abraham or Isaiah.

Again historically speaking, Jesus of Nazareth can only be

'real' to, in the sense of being imagined by those who are not Jesus' contemporaries, i.e. those who have never seen the actual historical Jesus. We as believers, however, affirm in that statement both the historical and theological significance of the existence and presence of the historical Jesus at that particular time. What we cannot affirm is that the actual historical Jesus still exists today in that form, even on the basis of his resurrection or Christian belief in his resurrection. What we now can think, reason and talk about the man Jesus of Nazareth pertains to Christian theological, messianological and anthropological interpretation, i.e. Christian witnessing-believing-understanding, of that man Jesus. In this way every believer has an image of the man Jesus, an image that he is the man, the Christ, the Son of God, the saviour of the world ... etc. whom every believer knows, worships and follows.

We may conclude that John 8.58, "... before Abraham was, I am.", should be understood as the evangelist's faith statement, faith in Jesus' spiritual existence or presence, which is based upon the Christian belief in the pre-existent Word of God incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, and should not be interpreted as though the man existed historically before Abraham was, and was contemporary with Abraham (vv.56f.), as naive realists do.

In the same vein, we may interpret John 12.41, "Isaiah said this because he saw his (Jesus') glory and spoke of him.", to mean that the evangelist was referring to the pre-incarnated spiritual presence (his glory) from the standpoint of the Christian belief in



Jesus' resurrection and spiritual post-existence. Hence we see the compound belief of the resurrection and incarnation faith at work in the evangelist's presentation of Jesus' mission, sc. his public ministry, and its result. While Jesus' mission and its result are presented in the light of the evangelist's believing-understanding of the prophet Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah is in turn interpreted in the light of the Christian believing-understanding of what Jesus did, sc. his signs or mighty works, and the unbelief of the Jews.

The crux of the matter is in these underlined words, "Isaiah said this because he saw his (Jesus) glory and spoke of him."

The first question is, was Jesus of Nazareth contemporary with Isaiah in Isaiah's life-time? Obviously, the answer to this historical query is negative.

The second question is, are the three verbs used of Isaiah, 'said', 'saw' and 'spoke', referring to Isaiah's life-time experiences? The answer is, "Yes". This choice excludes other possibilities of historical interpretation which are entertained by other exegetes, because an historical interpretation allows just one particular answer. However, the question of philosophical or theological interpretation is a quite different matter. To this we turn now.

The third question is the most difficult of all, "What did Isaiah see?" We know what Isaiah said. The content of 'this', sc. what Isaiah said, is recorded in Isaiah 6.10, and we have the OT and the Fourth Gospel to check it. Nevertheless, a deeper insight

is needed here. How could 'what Isaiah said' be interpreted as related to Jesus' glory? Or how do we understand Jesus' glory on the basis of our understanding of the Johannine overall Gospel image of the Christian Jesus and further identify and affirm it as that which Isaiah saw and of which he spoke? According to Isaiah 6.1 what he saw was "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up ..." and the glory of the Lord is mentioned in 6.3, "And one called to another (the seraphim) and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'"

The evangelist (and the pre-Johannine Church?) must have identified Jesus' glory with the glory of the Lord in Isaiah 6.1,3. For unless there was at work, in the early Church's religious movement or more precisely in the mind of the evangelist, the Christian way, or the Johannine effort, of thinking and reasoning how to relate and interpret both the OT scripture and the life and work of Jesus, a way or an effort which is based upon the compound belief of the resurrection and incarnation faith, how could the evangelist and the Christians of the early Church make such a statement as John 12.41?<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing discussion of the interpretation of some passages, such as John 2.13-22; 1.15; 8.48-59 and 12.37-41, two principles emerge concerning how Christians interpret the Fourth Gospel. First, we need to distinguish two types of existence or presence, sc. spiritual and physical or divine and human. Second, these passages should be interpreted and understood from certain

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1. The Christian way, or the Johannine effort, of interpreting the OT scripture and the gospel traditions of the early Church is discussed more fully later, see pp. 122-160.



theological, philosophical and historical viewpoints, which are based upon or derived from the fundamental Christian beliefs and within the reference frame of the commonly accepted linear concept of time. Let us return to Figure 2, p.45, and consider the second matter.

- (2) The complex correlation between the past, present and future of Isaiah, Jesus, the evangelist and a man of today.

First, what is the past and the present to Isaiah is already the past to Jesus. What is the past and the present to Jesus is already the past to the evangelist. What is the past and the present to the evangelist is already the past to a man of today.

Second, a part of Isaiah's future had become Jesus' past. A part of Jesus' future had become the evangelist's past. A part of the evangelist's future has become the past of a man of today.

A part of Isaiah's future became Jesus' present and was in the process of becoming past. A part of Jesus' future became the evangelist's present and was in the process of becoming past. A part of the evangelist's future becomes the present of a man of today and is in the process of becoming past.

Further, Isaiah's future was in part still future to Jesus. Jesus' future was in part still future to the evangelist. The evangelist's future is in part still future to a man today. Thus Figure 2 shows that Isaiah's future, Jesus' future and the evangelist's future are in part already the past, in part the present in process and in part still the future to a man of today.



This way of historical thinking and reasoning is crucial to our understanding of the 'prophecy and fulfilment' pattern of the Christian interpretation<sup>1</sup> in the NT writings. We shall merely mention in passing that the conundrum that lies in the incompatibility of the differently named Christian eschatologies, sc. realised, futuristic and inaugurated eschatology, may partly be explained, if these questions are more carefully considered: what is it that distinguishes one from another? and what is it that unites them all? The former is concerned with the differentiation between the constituent parts and the latter is concerned with the unity of them all. The constituent parts are

- (a) the past, the present and the future of personal and world history,
- (b) the past, the present and the future of Jesus of Nazareth and
- (c) the spiritual presence of the ever-living God and of the crucified-risen and post-existent Jesus with respective living generations.

The unity has to be sought in the perspective of God's salvation history. In other words, a more clarified image of Christian eschatology may emerge from the differentiated consciousness that enables Christians to distinguish the constituent parts within the unity of God's salvation history.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Other patterns of Christian interpretation in the Fourth Gospel, such as 'Testimony-to-Jesus' and 'Jesus-sublating-the-OT scripture', are discussed later, see pp. 141-160.

2. This question is merely mentioned in passing simply because it is beyond the scope of the present thesis.

We all know that man is born into traditions, histories, cultures and has still unfulfilled hopes and aspirations and an open future and that he is inter-acting with both the past and the future. As we have considered so far, Figure 2 demonstrates the complex correlation between the common past, present and future and an individual past, present and future. The past, the present and a part of the future of Isaiah could be, in Collingwood's term, 'incapsulated' in Jesus' present. The past, the present and a part of the future of Jesus could be incapsulated in the present of the evangelist. The past, the present and a part of the future of the evangelist could be incapsulated in the present of a man today. Further, in terms of time, the yet-to-be-fulfilled part of the future, or the open future, is in the process of being or becoming present in a living generation. But in terms of content, the yet-to-be-fulfilled part of the future may or may not be in the process of being or becoming fulfilled and actualised in a living generation. All depends on how men and women meet the opportunity of the emerging present, and the challenge of the emerging situation in relation to God, Jesus, mankind, world and culture.

3. The Christian gospel-events: present, living, personal, relational happenings, and the ongoing Christian mission.

Let us first consider human life in the present. Human life is more than tenses and standpoints. To be sure, the space-time and cause-effect continuum, natural laws, etc. are necessary and important for understanding and articulating the structure of human life or history. But human life or history is primarily concerned



with human affairs - events, activities, thoughts, truths and values, etc. In short, it encompasses the present knowledge of the life of mankind in the past as a whole, the present operation of being engaged in the process of living and acting, and the present orientation towards the looked-for future of mankind as a whole. These human affairs are the interactions of living agents, thinking subjects and historical beings - the interactions of persons and interpenetrations of human thoughts and ideas - all operating in the emerging present, i.e. in their contemporary living situations and in the newly emerging contexts.

Let us call the happenings of these human affairs 'relational' happenings, by which we express the multiplicity of personal relationships between God, Jesus, believers and their contemporaries in the world.<sup>1</sup> These happenings are 'present, living, personal, relational' happenings. They are 'present' happenings, because they take place in the present, to be more exact in the emerging present, and never in the past or in the future.

They are 'living' happenings, because they are contemporary events. However, the word 'living' has another meaning. It qualifies the person, too. Thus they are the happenings or events carried out by living agents. Here we simply confine ourselves to considering active and motivated or conscious and intentional aspects of personal relational happenings.

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1. W. our discussion on a contemporary Christian view of Christian religion which involves three facets and the multi-form personal relationships, pp. 32f.



They are 'personal' happenings, because they are those which each individual ultimately has to do, in and for himself, and which take place in, to and for himself and others.

They are 'relational' happenings, because a person can be related to himself as well as to others, such as people, things (ideas, traditions, laws, etc.) and the relationships of all these to each other in the contemporary world. They are happenings that take place between constituents of events. In short, the happening of human affairs is always and necessarily a present, living, personal, relational happening.

This notion of happening subsumes all living activities of human daily life, whether they are in words (the emphasis of the 'Word of God' school), in deeds, (the emphasis of the 'God-salvation-history' or 'Act of God' school) or in silent presences (the emphasis of the 'presence of God' school). This inclusive notion of happening should have been taken into account more definitively wherever and whenever the theology of these schools was discussed.

The silent presence of a person before, or among, others can be as dynamic as other forms of living activities, as the personal influence of a great man or woman, character or personality, can tell. The dynamic aspect of the silent spiritual presence of God or of the risen Jesus should be explored further. For Christian awareness of the presence of God or of the risen Jesus can emerge out of our experience of certain dynamic events, natural or human, or out of our experience of the hour of silence or stillness in nature, in

meditation and prayer, or out of our experience of that most solemn moment of the death of those who are close and dear to us.

Let us consider the implication of the word 'present' in the sentence, 'Man lives in the present'. The word 'present' can cover various durations or periods of time, including past, present and future, depending on the living context in which the man is. A few concrete examples will illustrate the point.

- (1) For example: Mr. Smith is in Edinburgh now. Mr. Smith is a visitor from Glasgow here for the day. He arrived here at ten o'clock this morning. He will be going back to Glasgow at four o'clock this afternoon. It is twelve o'clock now. Then the present, the 'now' in the sentence, covers six hours - two hours in the past and four hours in the future.
- (2) For example: Mr. Price is a visitor from London here in Edinburgh for a week. It is the third day of his visit. The 'now' in the sentence, 'Mr. Price is in Edinburgh now', covers two days in the past and one day in the present and four days in the future. Further, this one day in the present can be analysed as we analysed (1) above.
- (3) For example: Mr. Farmer came to Edinburgh to study for three years on the 1st October last year. Today is the 1st October of his second year in Edinburgh. The 'now' in the sentence, 'Mr. Farmer is in Edinburgh now', therefore, covers one year in the past, one day in the present and two years in the future.

- (4) For example: Mr. Fisher has always lived in Edinburgh. He is thirty years old now. He was born, brought up and educated in Edinburgh. Now he works here and will be living here in Edinburgh probably for the rest of his life. Then the words 'is' and 'lives' in these sentences, 'He is in Edinburgh now' and 'He lives in Edinburgh', cover his past, present and future, the whole of his life-span.

All the foregoing illustrations show this one point: these words 'present', 'now', 'today' or the verbs in the present tense 'is' and 'lives', cover a certain duration which includes the immediate past, present, and the immediate future of the person in question, and its length depends both on the living context he is in and on the content of what is said.

If we apply the foregoing discussion to the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel we may realise that the evangelist's emphasis on the reality of Christian faith and living taking place in the emerging present puts the prospective readers of the Gospel into the perspective of the 'emerging-present-orientated' life and mission of each individual and Christian community. The present reality of life pertains to and is dependent upon the divine abiding presence with those who believe in Jesus and the one true God, in the love-fellowship which is set in a world that is hostile to God, Jesus and



to the followers of Jesus. In this Gospel the Father's mission in the Son and Jesus' mission in his disciples are distinguished and yet inseparably interlocked with one another. This may be summarised as Jesus' imitation of God and the Christians' imitation of Jesus. These two features are explained in terms of the present, living, personal, relational happenings between God, Jesus, believers and their contemporaries in the emerging context.

The reality of this relational happening which takes place in human daily living situations and contexts is extremely complex indeed. This may be the reason why, in writing the Gospel, the evangelist has to move from words or concepts that express one kind of relationship to those that express other kinds of relationships. The notion of 'salvation' which is expressed in terms of the spiritual life, grace, truth, joy, peace, love, etc. in the Gospel - all these gifts, if they are to be received, actualised or experienced at all in the contemporary world, must be bestowed or realised in daily human relational happenings.

These daily human relational happenings are the loci where the problems and solutions of the God-man and man-man relations lurk. They are the points of contact and conflict between living agents. They are the loci where understanding or misunderstanding, clarification or ambiguity, reality or camouflage, believing and disbelieving, trust and suspicion, love and hatred, etc. are actualised or experienced. They are the loci where the judgement unto salvation or condemnation, reconciliation or enmity, fulfilling or destroying of life, take place.

These daily, human, relational happenings are also the moments of deciding whether to walk in the light or darkness, to give glory to God or man, to obey or rebel against the truth, to reject or follow evil. It is, therefore, in these happenings that the witnessing-believing-understanding of the experiences of the disciples' life and mission should be sought and expressed. It is also in these happenings that the division between believers and non-believers takes place. Whether one is of God or evil, from above or below, a true or only a nominal follower of Jesus, all this will be manifested. It is also in these happenings that the mission of bearing testimony to the glory, love, grace and truth of God, and of bearing fruit, sc. loving one another as Jesus loved us, and the actual God-man and man-man abiding union, take place. Thus, according to the Fourth Gospel, the Christian gospel is expressed in terms of the daily human relational happenings and the Christian mission of the communication of the Christian gospel undertaken within the context and understanding of these happenings here and now in the contemporary world.

The 'relational happening' between living agents, with which we are concerned, therefore, can only take place here and now, and always in their contemporary living situations, however multiple their dimensions and contexts. The Christian mission, as understood in terms of actualising the love-fellowship<sup>1</sup> between God and mankind, and man and man in daily personal relational happenings, is fulfilled

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1. v. John 13.34f.; 15.11-17, for the new commandment, "love one another" and v. also 14.21-31; 16.25-33, for the promise of "peace" and "joy".

in the here and now present or emerging present, whatever form it may take, rather than in the there and then present, i.e. in the past or future, as mere memory or expectation.

The implication of those sentences of Jesus which are in the present tense - the 'I am' sayings and expression of time, such as 'The hour is coming, and now is', 'His hour has not yet come' or 'a little while' - is subtle. For time can be punctiliar and can express the precise hour in timing the beginning - mid - or ending - point of human affairs. Or time can cover a certain duration, and its tense and length have to be considered case by case on the basis of the living context, on the context of what is said and on the agents involved.

The evangelist's use of the present tense and the work of the Paraclete is the device to depict God's presence and the abiding presence of Jesus with the believers in and for the world. Jesus had undertaken his Father's mission in his life-span, and Jesus sent the Paraclete from the Father or the Father sent the Paraclete to continue the mission. (John 14.15-17, 25, 26; 15.26-27; 16.7-15). Thus his disciples have been commissioned to undertake Jesus' mission (John 20.21-23). Jesus said, "My Father is working still, and I am working." (John 5.17). The eschatological harvest in John 4.34-38 suggests that Jesus sent his disciples to reap and, significantly enough, this commission is followed by this witness of the Samaritans, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard of ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the saviour of the world." (John 4.42). This encounter with the living Jesus in their contemporary personal relational happening



is the locus of their belief and salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Hence, the universal and abiding character of the Fourth Gospel and its relevance to all respective generations and to each individual everywhere have to be seen both in how the evangelist expressed the Christian gospel in terms drawn from his own experience in his own context, which has its own historical - place and time, cultural and religious - particularity, and in how he expressed it from the Christian point of view of the origin, nature and destiny of mankind in light of the life and death of Jesus. The evangelist also calls believers to imitate their master Jesus and their heavenly Father God, so as to be bound by the new commandment of loving one another in their own life-span and life-situation, and to understand their own vocation in service and bearing testimony to and for the world of their own generation. It is, therefore, in and through each generation's witnessing-believing-understanding of the human relational happening in the unity of the love-fellowship of the children of God or the disciples of Jesus that the continuing task of God's living presence and creative activities should be manifested to the world (John 13-17). Thus, in order to undertake this ongoing mission, each new Christian generation has to encounter the living God and the living Jesus, and also to

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1. Examples of this witnessing-believing-understanding can be multiplied from the reading of every page of the Fourth Gospel, for the evangelist's intention of writing the Gospel was clearly to have his prospective readers encounter the pre-existent-incarnated-crucified-risen-post-existent Jesus, and come to believe that this Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing they may have life through his name.

encounter that particular living generation in which one is born - the people with whom one has to live in the world in all its contexts and dimensions. The Christian gospel of Jesus, of God and of mankind has to be actualised anew, proclaimed anew, expressed anew and articulated anew by every new Christian generation in every age.<sup>1</sup> Here is an insight into the reality of the perennial communication and communion of abiding in love-fellowship between God, Jesus, believers and their contemporaries in their daily life and work. Is this what was, is and will be implied in the loaded words "spiritual renewal"? or "being born again, from above, of water and of the Spirit"?

4. The nature and scope of the discourse of Christian evangelical theology.

Christian theology (wider sense) can be an expressed thought, a talk or a written discourse. As written discourse, Christian theological literature pertains to the world of literary art. Hence, Christian theology in its literary form, whether the subject-matter dealt with is general or specific, will be confined to the conceptual structures or thought-world of a Christian author. If this observation is thought intelligible, reasonable and accepted, the Fourth Gospel viewed as a written record of or testimony to the early Church's Christians' experiences of God, Jesus, mankind, the world, culture and the relations of all these to each other, can be taken in the same way.

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1. cf. Neil Alexander, 'The united Character of the New Testament Witness of the Christ-Event', and his discussion on "newness", in The New Testament in Historical and Contemporary Perspective, ed. by H. Anderson and W. Barclay.



This thought-world, in a very broad sense, is the product of the objectification of humanly experienced, apprehended, affirmed, expressed, reality<sup>1</sup> in the history of mankind. This humanly experienced reality that pertains to the object or content of the thought-world of Christian theological thinking and reasoning will, therefore, subsume human experience of the Christian God, the Christian Jesus, mankind, the world and culture, etc. It follows that all theological operations, e.g. thinking, reasoning, talking or writing, will be carried out within the range of human cognitive and communicative experience, apprehension and affirmation. This means that all theological operation will be confined to the thought-world of a Christian author.

This thought-world is a world of images and forms. Again, it is the product of the objectification of humanly experienceable and/or experienced reality. The images and forms of this

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1. The phrase 'humanly experienced, apprehended, etc.' is employed to express that which is real human experience and that which mankind can perceive, conceive, and name. This experience subsumes all human biological, psychic, intellectual, rational, volitional aspects of life. In other words, it subsumes all activities or operations of human living and acting. This all inclusive and comprehensive character of human living experience may be called an 'experience-encompassing experience' and the world of his experience a 'world-encompassing world'. Of all civilizations ancient or modern which prize names so highly, Lonergan has this to say, "Prizing names is prizing the human achievement of bringing conscious intentionality into sharp focus and, thereby, setting about the double task of both ordering one's world and orientating oneself within it." Method in Theology, p.70. Cf. the whole of Chap.3, "Meaning", pp.57-99.



objectification may be concepts, words, propositions, hypotheses, presuppositions, ideas, symbols, arts, myths, etc. These are also the objects of human cognitive and communicative experiences.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, objectification does not and cannot exhaust the totality or the whole of any human experience, i.e. humanly experienceable and/or experienced reality. For an objectification of any experience, reality or entity, is necessarily and always an abstraction and generalisation of it. For there exist always, in Lonergan's worlds, 'empirical residues'.<sup>2</sup>

On the abstractness or universality of the subject-matter of any science, following Aristotle, Collingwood has this to say:

"The subject-matter of any science is something abstract or universal. Abstractness or universality is subject to degree."<sup>3</sup> and "... all science is of the universal and abstract; in other words, ... its procedure is to ignore the differences between this individual thing and that, and attend to what they have in common."<sup>4</sup>

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1. W. B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, and his discussion on 'linguistic meaning' and 'incarnate meaning', pp.70-73, and on 'stages of meaning', pp.85-99.

2. For fuller discussion on the 'empirical residues', see B. J. F. Lonergan, Insight, pp.25-32.

3. An Essay on Metaphysics, p.6.

4. Ibid., p.12.

We agree with Collingwood in regard to these two statements. However, it should be added that while the procedure of ignoring the differences between any one individual thing and of attending only to what it and others have in common, has advantages and strength, it is at the same time the limitation of all science, including the science of Christian evangelical theology.<sup>1</sup>

On this showing, the farthest range or horizon of one's thought-world is at the same time the methodical delimitation of any attempt at the time and place when and where a theological literary construction is attempted. Or, in metaphysical terms, the absolute presuppositions<sup>2</sup> presupposed at any particular time and place delimit and set logical bounds to any literary construction of Christian theology (wider sense).

Since the issue that pertains to the farthest range or horizon, or absolute presuppositions, is the matter that is concerned with the limit of human thinking and reasoning, understanding and intending,

1. The phrase the 'science of Christian evangelical theology' is used in Bultmann's sense to mean that its task is to set forth and explain the theological thoughts of the Christian canonical Gospels, though the writer does not necessarily follow in toto Bultmann's method and approach. See R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, vol.II, Epilogue, 1. 'The task and the problems of New Testament theology', pp.237-241, Eng. tr.

2. R. G. Collingwood, An Essay on Metaphysics, Part I, pp.1-77, where he discusses the science (task) of metaphysics, which is in fact a discussion of metaphysics based upon a philosophy of history. In his own words, "Metaphysics is the attempt to find out what absolute presuppositions have been made by this or that person or group of persons, on this or that occasion or group of occasions, in the course of this or that piece of thinking." (p.47).



at the time and the place, and since the issue is directly relevant to, and even has a far-reaching effect upon, the empirical method of the study of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel in the present thesis, we shall pursue it further, in the hope that the inquiry may lead us a step forward in our understanding of the nature and scope of the thought-world of the Fourth Gospel.

According to Collingwood, "Absolute presuppositions are not propositions." He goes on to explain,

"This is because they are never answers to questions ... whereas a proposition ... is that which is stated, and whatever is stated ... is stated in answer to a question. The point I am trying to make clear goes beyond what I have just been saying, viz. that the logical efficacy of an absolute presupposition is independent of its being true: it is that the distinction between truth and falsehood does not apply to absolute presuppositions at all, that distinction being ... peculiar to propositions."<sup>1</sup>

He further asserts that

"... absolute presuppositions are never ... propounded. I do not mean that they sometimes go unpropounded, ... I mean that they are never propounded at all."<sup>2</sup>

That absolute presuppositions are never propounded or that they are not to be questioned or verified is true only in terms of

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1. Ibid., p.32.

2. Ibid., pp.32f.



Collingwood's understanding both of historical fact and of Aristotle's metaphysical system. A fact is that which actually happens. Aristotle's metaphysical system is an ordered and structured hierarchical system of science or of the ABC pattern among universals.<sup>1</sup>

At this point we may pertinently ask, what were Collingwood's absolute presuppositions when he made these assertions? There are at least three. First, he was presupposing that "Every statement that anybody ever makes is made in answer to a question."<sup>2</sup> This might be called the logic of question and answer. Second, he was presupposing Aristotle's metaphysical system. Third, he was presupposing a linear concept of time and history that moves from past to present and from present to future. We shall first consider the third and then the second absolute presupposition.

By our understanding of a linear concept of time, Collingwood's assertions are intelligible and can be categorically unconditional. Nevertheless, whether any absolute presupposition can remain absolute for any person always and everywhere is an important question.

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1. Ibid., pp.6-9 and p.12. Collingwood following Aristotle assumes "that there are degrees of universality or abstractness, and that these give rise to a hierarchy of sciences, so that whenever a generic universal A is specified into sub-forms B and C there will be hierarchical relations between the superordinate science of A and the subordinate sciences of B and C.", and "that A is not only the indispensable presupposition of B and C, but their sufficient logical ground, so that the subject-matter of any superordinate science can be rightly described as generating or creating, in a logical sense, those of the sciences subordinate to it." (p.12).

2. Ibid., pp.23-25.

It is true that "To be propounded is not their (sc. the science of absolute presuppositions) business; their business is to be presupposed"<sup>1</sup>, because when they were presupposed, at that time and that place by that person, they were absolutely presupposed, fixed, unchangeable and finalised. Historically speaking, nobody can change this peculiar status of absolute presuppositions. This peculiar character of the decisiveness or ultimacy of the moment of chronological time and of historical happening is the sternness or solemnity of historical particularity.

This historical particularity is the delimitation of a writer's thought-world at the time and place when and where he attempted his theological literary construction. Pilate refused to change what he had written and, in answer to the Jews, said, "What I have written I have written." (John 19.22). What had the Fourth evangelist in mind when he wrote that text? Was it the fixed, unchangeable and finalised historical particularity of the historical happening of Pilate's writing it, or his testifying to the crucified one who is the King of the Jews?<sup>2</sup> Still what the evangelist has written he has written.<sup>3</sup> Absolute presuppositions were absolute, unconditional and ultimate to the person who made them, at the time when and at the place where they were presupposed.

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1. Ibid., p.33.

2. The unbelieving Jews denied that Jesus is the King of the Jews, but to the believing Christians Jesus is both the King of the Jews and the King of Israel (1.49; 12.13). For the transition from the denied King of the Jews to the received King of Israel, see the discussion below, pp.122-160.

3. John 20.31 says, "but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."



Thus far we have considered the peculiar character of absolute presuppositions in terms of the historical fact that they have been made at certain occasions and by certain persons. Now we move on to consider the peculiar character of absolute presuppositions in terms of their content, or of Aristotle's metaphysical system.

Two observations are in order: first, to a few, a minority perhaps, the same absolute presuppositions may not enjoy the prerogative of their absolute character. If this is the case, the same absolute presuppositions are either relative or irrelevant to those persons. To the majority of the corresponding generation or the succeeding generations, the same absolute presuppositions may either consciously or unconsciously be presupposed, e.g. a linear concept of time and history. But there is another possibility. Some contemporaries in another part of the world may not have been aware of the existence of those absolute presuppositions. I have in mind those who have never heard of the Christian gospel and/or read the canonical Gospel, have never known or entertained the Christian absolute presuppositions or beliefs that the Christians' God is the Father of the Christians' Jesus and of the whole of mankind, and that the Christians' Jesus is the Son of the Christians' God and the saviour of the world.

One pertinent question can be asked: can they understand or interpret their experience in the same way as Christians understand or interpret their experience? If the answer to the question is negative, then another question can be put forward: how does the belief in the revelation of God, the crucified-risen Jesus and of the Holy Spirit come into the Christian mind or emerge in his



thought-world? Or to put it differently, how do we understand genetically the origin of the Christian or Jewish belief in God? How do we understand genetically the origin of the Christian belief in Jesus? Are these beliefs in God and in Jesus absolute presuppositions?

Our second observation is, once the absolute presuppositions have been made, in order that the same absolute presuppositions can survive or revive as absolute presuppositions, they have to be presupposed absolutely and not just presupposed by the same person or by other persons at every emerging present or in every instance of thinking and reasoning, living and acting. In other words, after the event, that is, after an absolute presupposition has been made, "that which is presupposed" cannot remain universally and eternally absolute, unconditional and ultimate, unless it is once again, in every emerging present, absolutely presupposed.

We recall Collingwood's idea that a past thought can in some sense survive and be revived at different times and by different persons. Our primary concern is the question, what were the absolute presuppositions of Jesus and of the Fourth evangelist and how can they survive or be revived at different times and by the same or different persons?

Although the implication of the relation between fundamental Christian beliefs and absolute presuppositions has yet to be investigated and clarified, from the foregoing discussion we may be able to see that, while the propagation of fundamental Christian beliefs is the mission of Christian evangelists, the attempt to

identify and explain Christian absolute presuppositions is the task of Christian theologians.

Moreover, it is the task both for Christian evangelists and for Christian theologians to supply an interpretative and communicative context, whether literary, logical, situational or perspectival, whether structural, existential, symbolical or mythical, and whether static and/or dynamic in process, to unfold and show forth the meaning, truth and grace, of the life-giving Gospel-message of the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel that is enshrined in the media of communication and communion supplied by the evangelist. Here are the task and problems of a present day Christian interpreter and communicator of the Fourth Gospel in a nutshell which are pregnant with heavily loaded symbols and myths.<sup>1</sup>

Our knowledge of the evangelist, his person and thought, as stated earlier, is conditioned by his written and extant Gospel. This means that his theological literary construction is limited by the cultural milieu of his time. His contemporary culture includes the knowledge accumulated up to his own time, which the evangelist happens to have been personally able to appropriate. It follows that in our exposition of the Fourth Gospel we have to be conditioned

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1. Into the multiplicity of interpretative contexts in the discussion of the problem of the complexity of the task of explaining symbols, Lonergan has profound and searching insight to guide and help us. See his Method in Theology, pp.66-67. cf. also C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp.133-143. Dodd sees that understanding of symbols is the starting point of unfolding the evangelist's leading ideas. While R. Bultmann sees that the task and problems of interpretation and communication of the existential message in the New Testament lie in the task and problems of demythologisation.

by the range of the evangelist's thought-world, in order to be able to do justice to what the evangelist meant in his own terms, in response to his own situation.

In spite of this conditioning, we may have to go beyond or step outside the boundary of his thought-world in order to be able to have a critical understanding or to make a critical study of the Gospel. Prima facie, this may sound strange or odd; nevertheless this is not only legitimate, but somehow, a prerequisite to any critical inquiry into a written discourse. And this, for two reasons.

First, it is because the entities, persons or objects of our inquiry, such as God, Jesus and mankind, whom man or woman experiences, feels, apprehends and objectifies, can neither be kept within nor be confined to the human experience-world and/or thought-world, nor be limited by any enquirer's literary structure and literary work, because these entities are living and constantly on the move. In other words, these living entities are neither 'event' nor 'concept' nor 'word' nor 'name', but they are associated with and only partly identified by the event, concept, word and/or name.

Second, in order to understand the evangelist critically we have to study critically not only his Gospel but also the works, ordinary and critical, of others on the Gospel. Further, in order to understand critically both the evangelist and those Johannine scholars, we have to equip ourselves with a higher and more comprehensive viewpoint which goes beyond not only these scholar's viewpoints and ultimate presuppositions, but also, those of the



evangelist. Furthermore, in order to reach this higher and more comprehensive viewpoint, or one's own ultimate presuppositions, we have both to interpret and understand these scholars and the evangelist, becoming familiar with their viewpoints and ultimate presuppositions, while objectifying and understanding our own thought-world. To fulfil this prerequisite is the task not only of an ordinary type of historical and theological inquiry but of both a compound inquiry into "everyday" history and a philosophy of history<sup>1</sup>, and a compound inquiry into an "everyday" theology and a philosophy of theology<sup>2</sup> (wider sense).

While we are conditioned by the writing of both the evangelist and those scholars, we shall not necessarily be restricted or restrained by them, i.e. by their terminology, thought forms and literary devices, because we may go a step beyond or outside the boundary of the thought-world of the evangelist and those scholars. In fact, experience shows us that we are conditioned by, though not confined to, their thought-world, because we have our own conceptual structure or thought-world which we employ always in pursuing our twofold task, interpretation and communication.

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1. See the whole discussion on historical science or philosophy of history in R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, especially "Introduction", pp.1-3. See also his book, An Autobiography, chap.VIII, "The need for a philosophy of history", pp.77-78, and the discussion on the science or task of metaphysics in An Essay on Metaphysics, Part I, "Metaphysics", pp.1-77, which is a discussion of metaphysics based upon a philosophy of history.

2. Our provisional definition of a philosophy of theology is a critical study or reflective thinking about an ordinary theology, sc. theological thought. It is thought about theological thought. We shall meet this notion again on pp.161-211, where the ontologically structured metaphysical system of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel is discussed.

However, just as there may exist a positive possibility, so there may also exist a negative one. In the latter case, we may not be able to go beyond the limiting boundary or the conditioning horizon. We will be conditioned and consequently will necessarily be reluctantly, while more often unconsciously, subject ourselves to these scholars' viewpoints, suppositions, absolute presuppositions, thought-forms and visions or foresights, and those of the evangelist.

This extension of the range or horizon of the thought-world of others will provide us with a higher viewpoint. A higher viewpoint then will provide us with hindights, insights, inverse insights<sup>1</sup> and visions (foresights and aspirations), so that we may be able to analyse as well as synthesize the thoughts of the evangelist, which are ancient to us but contemporary to him, and our own thoughts on a modern understanding of the Christian gospel - in short, a new and higher integration, new and higher to us, of ancient and modern thought-worlds.

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1. On "inverse insight", see B. J. F. Lonergan, Insight, pp.19-25. "Besides direct insight ... there exists the small but significant class of inverse insight ... while direct insight meets the spontaneous effort of intelligence to understand, inverse insight responds to a more subtle and critical attitude that distinguishes different degrees or levels or kinds of intelligibility. While direct insight grasps the point, or sees the solution, or comes to know the reason, inverse insight apprehends that in some fashion the point is that there is no point, or that the solution is to deny a solution, or that the reason is that the rationality or the real admits distinctions and qualifications. Finally, while the conceptual formulation of direct insight affirms a positive intelligibility though it may deny expected empirical elements, the conceptual formulation of an inverse insight affirms empirical elements only to deny an expected intelligibility." (p.19). Surely Jesus and the evangelist had this inverse insight into contemporary Judaism.



In this inquiry we have to employ the method called dialectic<sup>1</sup>, because of the existence of different and/or opposing presuppositions, standpoints, horizons, and goals, etc. To say, therefore, that one has obtained the extension of the range or horizon in one's thought-world which goes beyond the range or horizon of the thought-world of others, is another way of saying, that by applying dialectical method to one's study one has made, or attempted to make, certain developments and progress in one's intellectual understanding and rational judgement about the subject-matter in question.<sup>2</sup>

1. "By dialectic, ... is understood a generalised apologetic conducted in an ecumenical spirit, aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions." B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, p.130. Of 'dialectic' Lonergan further has this to say, "Dialectic ... deals with conflicts. The conflicts may be overt or latent. They may lie in religious sources, in the religious tradition, in the pronouncements of authorities, or in the writings of theologians. They may regard contrary orientations of research, contrary interpretations, contrary histories, contrary styles of evaluation, contrary horizons, contrary doctrines, contrary systems, contrary policies. Not all opposition is dialectical. There are differences we have named perspectival, and they merely witness to the complexity of historical reality. But beyond these there are fundamental conflicts stemming from an explicit or implicit cognitional theory, an ethical stance, a religious outlook. They profoundly modify one's mentality. They are to be overcome only through an intellectual, moral, religious conversion. The function of dialectic will be to bring such conflicts to light, and to provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences and promotes conversion." Ibid., p.235.

2. We may say, in Lonergan's terms, that one has undergone 'intellectual conversion'. He says, "By conversion is understood a transformation of the subject and his world." Ibid., p.130. Intellectual conversion, therefore, means that one has obtained a new and wider horizon, new standpoints and perspectives in one's thought-world. cf. R. G. Collingwood, who writes: "If he (a historian) is able to understand, by rethinking them (past thoughts), the thoughts of a great many different kinds of people, it follows that he must be a great many kinds of man. He must be, in fact, a microcosm of all the history he can know. Thus his own self-knowledge is at the same time his knowledge of the world of human affairs." An Autobiography, p.115. However, in fact human knowing is limited.



Here lies a possibility of development, progress and/or deviation, in one's knowledge and in one's construction of Christian evangelical theology.

The sort of theological understanding the thesis is attempting to achieve is both an analysis and a synthesis of our own understanding

- (a) of the ancient Christian conception (the Johannine type) of the early Church's gospel-story about Jesus and about Christians of the early Church,
- (b) of the ensuing Christians' conceptions of the gospel-story concerning the Christians' belief and life, and
- (c) of the contemporary Christians' conceptions of that gospel-story, of (a) and (b).

This means that we are thinking and reflecting upon our own understanding of ancient, ensuing and contemporary thoughts and works about the Christian gospel-stories or gospel-events.<sup>1</sup>

In consequence, there occur in each writer's mind, operations or interplays of at least two thought-worlds, very often more than

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See B. J. F. Lonergan, Insight, pp.23f. He says, "... while it is, of course, true that human knowing is limited, still the transcendental notions are not a matter of knowing but of intending; they intend all that each of us managed to learn, and they now intend all that as yet remains unknown. In other words, the transcendental field is defined not by what man knows, not by what he can know, but by what he can ask about; and it is only because we can ask more questions than we can answer that we know about the limitations of our knowledge."

1. v. above, pp.12-14.

two, of which at least one has to be the writer's own, because this is required in human cognitive, epistemological, interpretative, and communicative, operations. This thinking and reasoning operation applies to all thinkers, speakers and writers, including the Fourth evangelist and Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, both analytical inquiry into and synthetical construction of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel are carried out from the standpoint and within the perspective of a contemporary Christian's witnessing-believing-understanding of his experience of God, Jesus, mankind, the world, culture, and of the relationship of all these to each other.

To summarise the discussion of the present chapter, our task is involved in a perennial interpretation and re-interpretation both of the inherited view and of the presently generated contemporary Christian's view of the Christian gospel-event and religion. In considering the issue of the contemporaneity of the ever living God and of the crucified-risen Jesus with respective generations, we are led to consider the formal correlation of the thought-world of Isaiah, Jesus, the evangelist and a present day Christian, between the three basic chronological dimensions, the past, the present and the future, within the perspective of a linear concept of time and history. It is when we take seriously our understanding of human affairs in terms of relational happenings in the emerging present, i.e. in their contemporary living situation and in the newly emerging contexts, that we are able to see more clearly the significant implications of our insight into the Christian gospel-events (that they always take place in our present,

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1. v. above, pp. 40f.

living, personal and inter-personal, relational happenings) for Christians' daily living and renewed encounter with the living God, the crucified-risen Jesus and respective living generations and for the ongoing Christian mission in their contemporary world.

Further, our understanding of the abstractness or universality of the subject-matter of the science of Christian evangelical theology opens up the possibility of discussing the range, horizon, absolute presuppositions or Christian fundamental beliefs of the universe of discourse, or the thought-world, of the Fourth evangelist. Seen in the light of dialectic and from a higher viewpoint, we have come to know that in the limitation of the science of Christian evangelical theology lies the possibility of further development of one's knowledge and in one's construction of Christian evangelical theology. This possibility will be explored in our third chapter. Meanwhile, in the second chapter, we shall consider 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian' theology in transition and the emergence of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel in its historical and the theological perspective on the origin, formation and development of the Christian evangelical theology of the early Church.



## CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN, FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF CHRISTIAN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

In this chapter we shall consider the historical origin, formation and development of the Christian evangelical theology of the early Church, as it is depicted in the Fourth Gospel, from the Jewish historical, religious and theological background to the Christian historical, religious and theological foreground. A critical inquiry is directed both to the historical, religious and theological role played by the Jews, Jesus and his disciples in the transition period from Judaism to Christianity especially in its incubative and earlier phases.

In this inquiry it is assumed that the man, his life, history and theology, is logically, exegetically and historically a necessary ground and indispensable presupposition of the Church's preaching and teaching of the Christian gospel and for the study and progress of the theology of the Christian gospel.<sup>1</sup> Our preliminary definition or understanding of "Jesus' theology" is the theological thought of Jesus of Nazareth, sc. his witnessing-believing-understanding of God, messiah, people and culture, and of the relationship of all these to each other in the contemporary world. This theological thought, naturally, is the one embedded in the gospel traditions of the early Church, and further incapsulated

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1. v. H. Anderson, Jesus and Christian Origins; C. F. D. Moule, The Origin of Christology; R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament; H. Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, Eng.tr. Part I, is a significant development after Bultmann's work, in that Conzelmann goes beyond Bultmann's position that "the historical Jesus is the necessary and only presupposition of the kerygma", and expounds the theology of Jesus of the canonical Gospels. v. also R. Batey (ed.), New Testament Issues, "Introduction", which is a survey of the issues and provides a context in which the essays in the book may be more readily read, pp.1-13.

in the Fourth Gospel. The essay presented here is hypothetical and cannot, of course, lay any claim to finality. For there is no pre-suppositionless discourse in any literary construction of human thought. The thesis of the present chapter is: Christian evangelical theology is the compound of 'Judaeco-Jesus-Christian' theology in transition. Nevertheless, we hope that through this unfolding of the historical, philosophical and theological perspectival understanding we may shed some light on the origin, formation and development of the faith and life of the Johannine Christian community which gave birth to the imaginative creativity of the Fourth evangelist and his theological thought. We shall also attempt to explain the nature of this transition, and to indicate the pivotal position which the Christian evangelical theology has been privileged to hold in relation to, or within, the theology-family of Christian and biblical theology in the historical, philosophical and theological perspective of the rise and development of those disciplines.

For this purpose and methodical delimitation, we shall pay special attention to only one question, i.e. in what ways, according to the Fourth Gospel, OT scripture was used to interpret Jesus, the Jewish and Christian religions, sc. the Jewish and Christian faith, life and theology, and to express the Christian gospel and Christian evangelical theology.

1. Christian evangelical theology, sc. the compound<sup>1</sup> of 'Judaео-Jesus-Christian' theology, in transition

We shall bear in mind that the process of the origin, formation and development of the evangelical theology of the early Christian community as presented in the Fourth Gospel is assumed to have at least three successive, related, but qualitatively different historical phases.

The first phase can be delineated as the movement from Jewish theology to 'Jesus' theology, or expounded as 'Jesus' theology generated within the matrix of Jewish community life and theology. A compound word 'Judaео-Jesus' theology is coined to express the successive, related, but qualitatively different characteristics of Jewish and 'Jesus' theology. Thus the first phase may be considered the earliest stage during which the 'Judaео-Jesus' theology emerged. It is during this stage that the 'Judaео-Jesus' theology would have to be ascertained, if it could be ascertained at all historically and theologically.

The second phase of the transition can be delineated as the movement from the 'Judaео-Jesus' theology to 'Judaео-Jesus-Christian' theology, or expounded as the theology of the early Christian community, i.e. 'Jesus-Christian' theology, generated within the matrix of 'Judaео-Jesus' theology. The compound word 'Judaео-Jesus-Christian' theology is coined to express the successive and related,

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1. v. F. C. Grant, An Introduction to New Testament Thought, chap.IV, "The scope of New Testament thought", secs. 6, "Religious experience", and 7, "A theology in transition", pp.54-58. v. also E. F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel, pp.4-14, where Scott discusses three well-marked directions and problems of the Gospel as "a work of transition" (p.4).



yet qualitatively different characteristics and nuances of Jewish, 'Jesus' and Christian theology. Thus the second phase may be considered as the intermediate stage between the first and the third stage of the process by which the 'Judaео-Jesus-Christian' theology came into being. It is during this intermediate stage that the 'Judaео-Jesus-Christian' theology would have to be ascertained, if it could be ascertained at all.

It is during the next, the third, stage that we are able to see that a fuller transition and transformation has taken place from Jewish to Christian theology, or from the community life of the Jewish synagogue to the community life of Jesus' disciples separated from the former as depicted in the story of the conflict, persecution and then separation between the Jewish synagogue and the Christian community in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

The third phase in the transition process can be delineated as the movement from 'Judaео-Jesus-Christian' theology to 'Jesus-Christian' theology, or expounded as the 'Jesus-Christian' theology generated within the matrix of the Jewish synagogue. There existed in the synagogue a mixed community consisting of ordinary (non-Christian) and Christian Jews. Within this mixed community there also existed a mixed compound theology consisting of Jewish, 'Jesus' and Christian theology. Thus the third phase may be considered as the stage during which the 'Jesus-Christian' theology came into being. Nevertheless, this 'Jesus-Christian' compound theology cannot be separated from the 'Judaео-Jesus-Christian' compound theology,

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1. v. J. L. Martyn, History and Theology of the Fourth Gospel; S. Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel; A. A. Trites, The New Testament Concept of Witness; W. A. Meeks, The Prophet-King, pp.294f.; C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel.

because the latter, being the matrix and the root from which the former originated, cannot be denied by the former. For to deny it would be to deny one's origin and to cut oneself off from one's roots.

Do not we then have to take into account the mediatorial role played by the 'Judaeo-Jesus' theology, the first stage theology, and the 'Judaeo-Jesus-Christian' theology, the intermediate stage theology, in the transition process within which Christian theology originated out of Jewish theology?

These three stages clearly constitute successive, related, but qualitatively different phases of the transition period. Insight into this transition process may give us a clue to unfolding the intricate and vexing problem of 'change and development', or 'change and continuity',<sup>1</sup> between the Jewish synagogue and the Christian community, Jewish and Christian theology and Judaism and Christianity. Naturally, these three phases are the product of an historical and imaginative construction. Nevertheless, it is a construction based upon data found in the Fourth Gospel.

The data are the stories of the early Christian Jews, or Jewish Christians, as we might call them. They were persecuted because of

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1. The compound notion 'change and development' or 'change and continuity' between Judaism and Christianity has been employed to replace the compound notion 'continuity and discontinuity' between Judaism and Christianity, which conceals a paradoxical dilemma. For once we postulate discontinuity between them for the expediency of affirming the distinctiveness or unique status of the Christian religion over against Judaism we find ourselves in the situation of attempting to explain the continuity between them, which easily gives way to appealing to logically unfathomable paradox, sc. to supernatural intervention or to a logical jump in our analysis of the transitional process from Judaism to Christianity. See also C. F. D. Moule's discussion of "The distinctiveness of Christ", "A comment by Haddon Willmer", and "The distinctiveness of Christ: further comment by C. F. D. Moule and Haddon Willmer" in The Origin of Christology, chap. 7, "Prospect: the 'ultimacy' of Christ", pp. 142-174.

their uncompromising and committed allegiance to the Christian Messiah, Jesus, and were eventually excommunicated from the synagogue. Finally, the disciples of Jesus formed themselves into a Christian community. The change of name for these early Jewish Christians from 'Jews', the disciples of Moses (9.28), to 'Christian Jews' or 'Jewish Christians' in the intermediate stage and then to 'Christians', the disciples of Jesus, illustrates this transition and schism. If the 'Jesus-Christian' movement that culminated in schism is expressed in terms of 'sublation'<sup>1</sup>, then the compound word 'Judaeo-Jesus-Christian' theology explains the three successive, related, yet qualitatively different phases of its historical and theological transition and transformation.

A further inquiry into this transition process may lead us to acquire better information<sup>2</sup> in regard to the historical, religious and theological background, origin and formation of the Fourth Gospel

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1. The word 'sublation' is used in Karl Rahner's sense, as Lonergan understands it, sc. "What sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realisation within a richer context." K. Rahner, Hörer des Wortes, p.40, quoted by B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, p.241. We shall meet this word 'sublation' again on pp.155-159 in this chapter.

2. cf. E. Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus; J. L. Martin, History and Theology of the Fourth Gospel; S. Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel, Part Five, "Systematic Summary and John 1.17"; C. H. Dodd, Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, Parts I and II, and Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel; O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle; and R. A. Culpepper, The Johannine School. These books give particular effort to considering this complex question.



and the Christian community to which the evangelist belongs. For this inquiry it is necessary that some aspects of Jewish theology and Christian theology and their correlation should be explored. However, we shall, first, consider the correlation between biblical, Christian and evangelical theology.

2. The correlation between biblical, Christian and evangelical theology.

The implication of what has been considered in the previous section may be stated in a formal manner in two propositions:

Prop. I. In Christianity, all biblical theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian theology, and vice-versa.

Prop. II. In Christianity, all Christian theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian evangelical theology.

It is the hope that in the process of exploring and scrutinising the vaguely defined theological technical terms, such as biblical, Christian and evangelical theology on the one hand, and on the other, the yet to be clarified and determined correlation

between these three theologies,<sup>1</sup> we may be enabled to make clear

- (a) some basic positions we hold in regard to the Old and the New Testament<sup>2</sup> and the Fourth Gospel,
- (b) some positive orientations we have towards them, and
- (c) some fundamental attitudes which we adopt towards them.

For the ways in which we think, reason, reflect and deliberate, the manners in which we behave and act, and the styles in which we bear testimony to what we know, believe and live (John 3.11, 18-21; 8.12-9.41) - these ways, manners and styles are, in the main, conditioned and even determined by the views and standpoints we hold, the orientations and preferences we have and the attitudes and approaches we adopt towards these biblical writings, sometimes consciously but quite often unconsciously.<sup>3</sup>

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1. v. C. H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology; N. Perrin, "The Challenge of New Testament Theology Today", in New Testament Issues, R. Batey (ed.); F. C. Grant, An Introduction to New Testament Thought, and his discussion of the origin of the term 'New Testament theology', pp.18-21; R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Eng.tr., vol.2, "The History of New Testament Theology as a Science", pp.241-251; H. Schlier, The Relevance of the New Testament, p.1, footnotes 1 and 2, and p.14; C. T. Craig, "Biblical Theology and the Rise of Historicism", JBL, 62, 1943, pp.281-94; A. N. Wilder, "New Testament Theology", in Tradition in the Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow, H. R. Willoughby (ed.), pp.419-36; E. Käsemann, "The Problem of a New Testament Theology", NTS, 19, 1972-73, pp.235-45; and J. Daniélou, "The New Testament and the Theology of History", in The Gospel Reconsidered: A selection of papers, read at the International Congress on the Four Gospels in 1957, pp.58-67.

2. On Old Testament see below pp.93-99 and on New Testament p.99.

3. The question of the canon, its normativeness and its effect and impact upon biblical scholars, Christian theologians and Christians are relevant here. However, they are not questions of immediate concern to us. They are outside the scope of the present thesis.

It is to be expected that some standpoints, contexts, perspectives and horizons, within which the task of the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel has to be carried out, may become apparent during the process of determining the correlation between OT and NT theologies and between Christian theologies and Christian evangelical theologies. Further, it is also to be expected that some basic perspectives and horizons, within which we present or communicate what we have learned from our study and interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, may become apparent during the process of clarifying some views and ideas which we have entertained in regard to the OT and the NT, or those which have been expounded by other scholars. Let us consider these two propositions.

Prop. I. In Christianity, all biblical theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian theology, and vice versa.

It is obvious that Christian biblical theology subdivides itself into OT theology and NT theology and that NT theology subdivides itself into the theology of the synoptic Gospels, the theology of the Fourth Gospel, Pauline theology, etc.<sup>1</sup> In saying that in Christianity all biblical theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian theology, we are saying that each of these subdivided

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1. This system of division presupposes the finished product of the Christian Bible consisting of the OT and the NT. Hence this system is intelligible from the standpoint of the fourth century Christians rather than that of the first century Christians. It also presupposes the general background of the formalised or systematised Christian theology of the twentieth century Christian and theological education. Further, it employs Aristotle's metaphysical system or his hierarchical system of the 'ABC' pattern among universals', (cf. chap. I, p. 73, footnote 1).



theologies is essentially Christian theology. This is quite right, because in view of christo-centric theology, the theology of the Fourth Gospel and NT theology can claim this prerogative, both in name and in reality. But how are we to justify the same claim, both in name and in reality, for OT theology? It is indeed questionable and problematic, because the case for OT theology is neither plain nor self-evident. Let us, therefore, examine it first.

A. In Christianity, OT theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian theology.

To begin with, this much can be claimed, sc. the historical or chronological priority of the OT scripture, because it existed before the birth of Christianity and the NT. In fact, during Jesus' lifetime the scripture of the Jews was the OT. We shall, therefore, consider not so much the historical process by which the OT became a part of the Christian Bible as the historical fact that the OT scripture was used by the Jews, Jesus and the disciples of Jesus in the early Church. Our primary concern now is to distinguish some of the ways in which contemporary scholars interpret the OT and pursue OT theology.<sup>1</sup>

First, the OT can be treated by historians as a historical book. In this sense it is viewed as a classic which contains the religious

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1. This will be just an overall general discussion or a perspectival picture, and cannot be claimed to be an analytical, critical or synthetical study of the matter.

history and beliefs of the Jews. Hence, the OT theology can be operated from certain historical standpoints and within certain historical perspectives and horizons. This operation can be called an inquiry into the history of the people of Israel, or more precisely an inquiry into the history of the religious beliefs of Judaism.

OT theology operated from historical standpoints and expounded within historical perspectives and horizons alone, whether in terms of general or religious history, or in terms of the inquiry into OT writers' thoughts about their past, present and future, sc. the history of their thoughts, though legitimate as historical science, can do justice fully neither to the book nor to the Jews, their people, thoughts and religion, particularly when the inquiry is concerned with the testimonies of their witnessing-believing-understanding of their God, people, world, and the relations of all these to each other. The requisite study has to go beyond the disciplines of the science and philosophy of history.

Second, the OT can be treated as the religious book of the Jews. Believing and practising Jews will study the book from their own historical, religious and theological standpoints, and expound the theological thoughts of the book within their own historical, religious and theological perspectives and horizons. Again, this operation is quite legitimate for the Jews and Judaism. However, Christians go a step further. This leads us to the next point.

Third, the OT is a Christian book, too. It can be studied by Christians from Christian standpoints and expounded within Christian

perspectives and horizons. Hence, in Christianity, OT theology can be operated from Christian historical, religious and theological standpoints and within these perspectives and horizons. In fact, this was the way, as we shall shortly show, in which the Christians of the early Church studied and interpreted the OT scripture.<sup>1</sup>

These Christians were people, who lived in the same world as did their contemporaries who had a certain historical, religious and theological consciousness. Their contemporaries might be fellow Jews or other races. But the former were Christian Jews. They believed and worshipped the same God, the God of the OT, in whom the Jews contemporary with themselves believed. Nevertheless, they lived in the same world and believed in the same God from the Christian historical, religious and theological standpoints. Furthermore, they interpreted their religious beliefs and life within Christian historical contexts, theological perspectives and faith-horizons.

These three viewpoints, which approach the OT respectively as a historical, a Jewish or a Christian book, are perspectively and qualitatively different, different because of their subject-matter, hence content, scope, concern and objective, but they are inseparably

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1. v. A. Richardson, The Miracle Stories of the Gospels, pp.99-104; C. H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures; F. C. Grant, op.cit.; B. Lindars, New Testament Apologetics; J. M. Myers, O. Reimherr, H. N. Bream (eds.), Search the Scriptures; S. Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel; E. D. Freed, Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John; W. A. Meeks, The Prophet-King; and T. F. Glasson, Moses in the Fourth Gospel.



interlocked so as to form an over-all Christian viewpoint. In other words, the Christian viewpoint is more inclusive and is able to subsume the historical and Jewish viewpoints.<sup>1</sup>

In Christianity, therefore, OT theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian theology in the following two senses:

- (a) historical and
- (b) theological.

(a) The OT authors' looked-for future<sup>2</sup> has partly become the present of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus' looked-for future has partly become the present of the NT authors. Further, the NT authors' looked-for future has partly become the present of the successive Christian generations down the ages. We say partly, because in the chronological sense, their futures overlap the succeeding generation's past, present and future. Obviously, we are thinking of the chronological correlations between the OT authors, Jesus, the NT authors and their successive generations within a linear concept of time and history moving from past to future.

On the other hand, the OT authors' past, present and part of their future became Jesus' past, and partly lived on in Jesus.

1. Moses and the scriptures bear witness to Jesus in John's Gospel. This assertion has been made by all the writers referred to on p.96, footnote 1.

2. v. above, pp.37-40 and pp.57-59, on a living person's futurity and the present, living, personal, relational happening in an emerging present. v. also R. Pregeant, Christology Beyond Dogma: Matthew's Christ in Process Hermeneutic, and his emphasis on the "futurity of a text" and that the "text itself is interpretation ... with the explicit intention of shaping its readers' future", pp.15-17.

Jesus' past, present and part of his future became the NT authors' past and partly lived on in the NT authors. The NT authors' past, present and part of their future became the past of succeeding generations down the ages, and lived on and survived in them. The OT authors, Jesus and the NT authors, and even the ensuing Christian generations that have come and gone - all these people's past, present and part of their future partly lived on and survived, because these people, in a chronological sense,<sup>1</sup> lived on within and with the ensuing Christian generations.

(b) In the theological sense, however, the correlations between the OT, Jesus, the NT and our contemporary Christian generation can be explained and understood in terms of the 'promise and fulfilment' of the divine salvation from the Christian historical and theological standpoints and within these perspectives and horizons. The hopes and promises witnessed to in the OT have partly been fulfilled in the life and mission of the early Church. Further, the hopes and promises witnessed to in the NT have partly been fulfilled in the life and mission of the Christian Church down the ages.

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1. 'History' here is used to mean historical thought or to represent the realm of historical thought. See R. G. Collingwood, An Autobiography, "All history is the history of thought ... And there is nothing else except thought that can be the object of historical knowledge. Political history is the history of political thought ..." (p.110). Mutatis mutandis, religious history, in our case Jewish and Christian religious history, is the history of Jewish and Christian theological thought. Further on the idea of a living past, Collingwood says, "The past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present." (Ibid., p.97). His discussion is based upon his understanding of evidence for a past event that survives in one form or another in the present world. For fuller treatment of the idea of a living past, v. Ibid., pp.96-100.

Thus, within the context and scope of Christian theology and biblical theology, the OT and the NT form a correlation, and are interdependent in a chronological and historical sense, in that the earthly life and ministry of Jesus and the belief and life of the early Church receive a Christian OT theological interpretation, and in that the OT in turn receives a Christian theological interpretation.

Thus by scrutinising the Christian historical and theological standpoints, perspectives and horizons we are able to see that the Christian interpretations of

- (i) the OT scripture,
- (ii) of Jesus' life, work, word and person, and
- (iii) of the early Church's life, mission, belief and worship -

these three interpretations constituted the shape and content of the Christian gospel and the theology of the early Church.<sup>1</sup>

B. NT theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian theology.

It goes without saying that the NT has to be studied from Christian historical and theological (in the wider sense) standpoints and interpreted within christological and theological (in the narrower sense) perspectives and horizons. Nevertheless, this positive and categorical statement has to be expounded, because it

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1. We shall shortly return to consider in more concrete terms these three interpretations and the constitutive functions they play in the task of Christian interpretation on pp.122-159.



is based upon three commonly accepted facts<sup>1</sup> and one fundamental Christian belief. These facts are:

- (a) The NT is a Christian book combining 27 separate writings in one volume.
- (b) The NT is a collection of early Christian writings, written, used, accepted and canonised by the early Church.
- (c) The NT consists of the extant records of the testimonies of the Christians of the early Church to their believing-understanding of the Christian God, the Christian Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, man and the personal relationship of all these to each other in the contemporary world.

The one fundamental Christian belief, or, as it might be called within the present theological discourse, conviction or presupposition, is this: the Christian God is the 'living' God who raised Jesus from the dead, and man can experience<sup>2</sup> this God and this risen Jesus.

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1. The term 'fact' is used in the sense that when a theory or a believing-understanding has already established its efficient, constitutive and communicative meaning within a certain community, the theory or the believing-understanding can be called 'fact', or more precisely 'fact mediated by meaning' in the human thought-world. In other words, within the realm of the human thought-world one can use the term 'fact' to refer to a well-established common/sense theory or believing-understanding of a community. A well-established religious belief can also be called 'fact', a fact of personal commitment and dedication to the object of one's faith and worship or ultimate concern.

2. The term 'experience' is meant to express 'a present, living, personal, relational, happening' between people, God and Jesus in the world. cf. chap.I, pp.59-61.

At this point it might be well to point out that these three facts are arranged in a retrospective order as they are traced backwards from the finished product, the one volume NT.

A sensitive critic can immediately see that fact (c) stands or falls depending on whether the one fundamental Christian belief is or is not accepted. For the truth and validity of the statement in fact (c), namely the testimonies of the Christians of the early Church, depends entirely and ultimately upon whether one does or does not believe in this God and this Jesus, and upon the meaning the early Church and/or an individual Christian assigns to the personal relations between people, this God and this Jesus in the world. This is the Christian way of saying that the intelligibility and authenticity, legitimacy and substantiation of the truth and validity of the Christian experience of God and Jesus depend entirely and ultimately upon the standpoint the Christian Church and/or a Christian holds, the orientation the Christian Church and/or a Christian has, and the attitude the Christian Church and/or a Christian adopts, towards this one fundamental Christian belief.

It has been said that there is one fundamental Christian belief, but in fact this belief contains or subsumes at least three elemental Christian beliefs. They are as follows:

- (a) God is the living one (John 5.26; 6.57). This God has power to raise the dead and give them life (5.21; 17.2). Christians claim that God has raised Jesus, the crucified Jew from the dead (cf. Acts 2.36; 3.12-15).

(b) This crucified-risen Jesus has lived ever since.

He is a living Jesus. He has power to raise the dead and to give life to believers (John 1.4; 4.14; 5.21, 24, 26; 6.27, 35, 40, 47, 48, 51, 54, 63, 68; 8.12; 10.10; 11.25; 14.6; 17.2, 3; 20.31).

(c) People can experience God and Jesus, in the sense that they have certain personal relations with this God and this Jesus. They are answerable for their existence and conduct to God and Jesus. Their responsibility to God and Jesus is matched by their responsibility to their fellows and the world in which they live.

Thus, the one fundamental Christian belief can be called a 'compound belief', consisting of three elemental beliefs, the belief in God, in Jesus and in the reality that people have personal relation with God, Jesus and with their fellows.

If theology (in the wider sense) is, by definition, human thinking, reasoning and talking of God, and the relation between God and people in the world, then this definition can be applied to Jewish theology or Jewish OT theology. Since Christian theology has a further component, Christian messianology, Christian theology (in the wider sense) will consist of human thinking, reasoning and talking of the Christian God, the Christian Messiah Jesus, people, and the relationship of all these to each other in the contemporary world.



If our view of the NT, as stated earlier (p.102, fact c), is that it consists of the extant records of the testimonies of the Christians of the early Church to their believing-understanding of the Christian God, the Christian Messiah, Jesus, mankind, and the relationship of all these to each other in the contemporary world, then NT theology has exactly the same subject-matter as Christian theology does.

If NT theology is a subdivision of biblical theology, and biblical theology is a subdivision of Christian theology, we can say that Christian theology holds a superior position to all other subdivisions of Christian theology. This is correct, if OT theology is viewed from the Christian standpoint. That is why we state, in proposition I on p. 91 that in Christianity, all biblical theology is fundamentally and ultimately Christian theology, and vice versa.

However, if OT theology is viewed from the Jewish standpoint, since historically and theologically speaking Christian theology is posterior to Jewish theology, hence posterior to Jewish OT theology, in this qualified sense Christian theology has to look up to its predecessor or antecedent and becomes subordinate to Jewish OT theology. Hence, we have to differentiate Christian OT theology from Jewish OT theology. What differentiates the two OT theologies is the messianic dogma or messianology. The peculiar Christian historical and theological assertion, namely the identifiable Christian Messiah, the incarnate-crucified-risen Jesus, marks out Christian messianology from Jewish messianology, namely the Jewish messianic expectation of the coming of the Messiah who is yet to be identified in the looked-for future. Thus the Christian identified and identifiable Messiah

and the Jewish yet-to-be-identified Messiah, i.e. the Jewish expected Messiah or the Messiah still unidentifiable with any historical figure, mark the divide between Christian OT theology and Jewish OT theology.

Following Bultmann's definition of NT theology<sup>1</sup>, we may be able to say that NT theology has the task both of interpreting and communicating the NT writers' believing-understanding of the experimental reality of the NT Christian testimony to the Christian God, the Christian Messiah Jesus, mankind and the relations of all these to each other in the contemporary world.<sup>2</sup>

What we have said of Christian theology and of NT theology can be said of the theology of the Fourth Gospel. For the latter has the task of interpreting and communicating the evangelist's witnessing-believing-understanding of the Christian God, the Christian Messiah Jesus, mankind and the relations of all these to each other in the contemporary world.

Now, we are in a better position to consider a few aspects of the correlation between Christian, biblical, OT, NT theologies, the theologies of Gospels and of the Fourth Gospel.

1. NT theology is a science which has "the task of setting forth the theological thought of the New Testament writings ..." (R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Eng. tr., vol.2, p.237).

2. v. J. Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, "Christian theology seeks to think the Church's faith as a coherent whole", and "Theology may be defined as the study which, through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express the content of this faith in the clearest and most coherent language available." (p.1).

Although our concern now is not so much to discern the historical process and background of how biblical theology subdivided itself into OT and NT theology, or to know the theology of the Christian gospel as it emerged in the context of Christian theological scholarship, it will be of some advantage to lay out in tabular form what we may call a 'genealogy of the family of Christian theology' (Table I and II on pp. 106f.). For within these various perspectives, we are able to see schematically how the theology of the Fourth Gospel descends from Jewish theology, and how intimately it is co-ordinated with Christian theology.<sup>1</sup>

In table I, the theologies in question are juxtaposed in order to show that they co-exist side by side and that each is a theology according to subject-division, field-division or book-division,<sup>2</sup> though they are all related members of the 'theology-family'. It is obvious that many others are excluded from this table, because of methodological delimitation. However, Table I acts as a point of departure. Now Table II p.107 is a rearrangement of Table I. It is put in a different perspective, i.e. it has the double straight line of descent, so the relation is viewed vertically rather than horizontally.

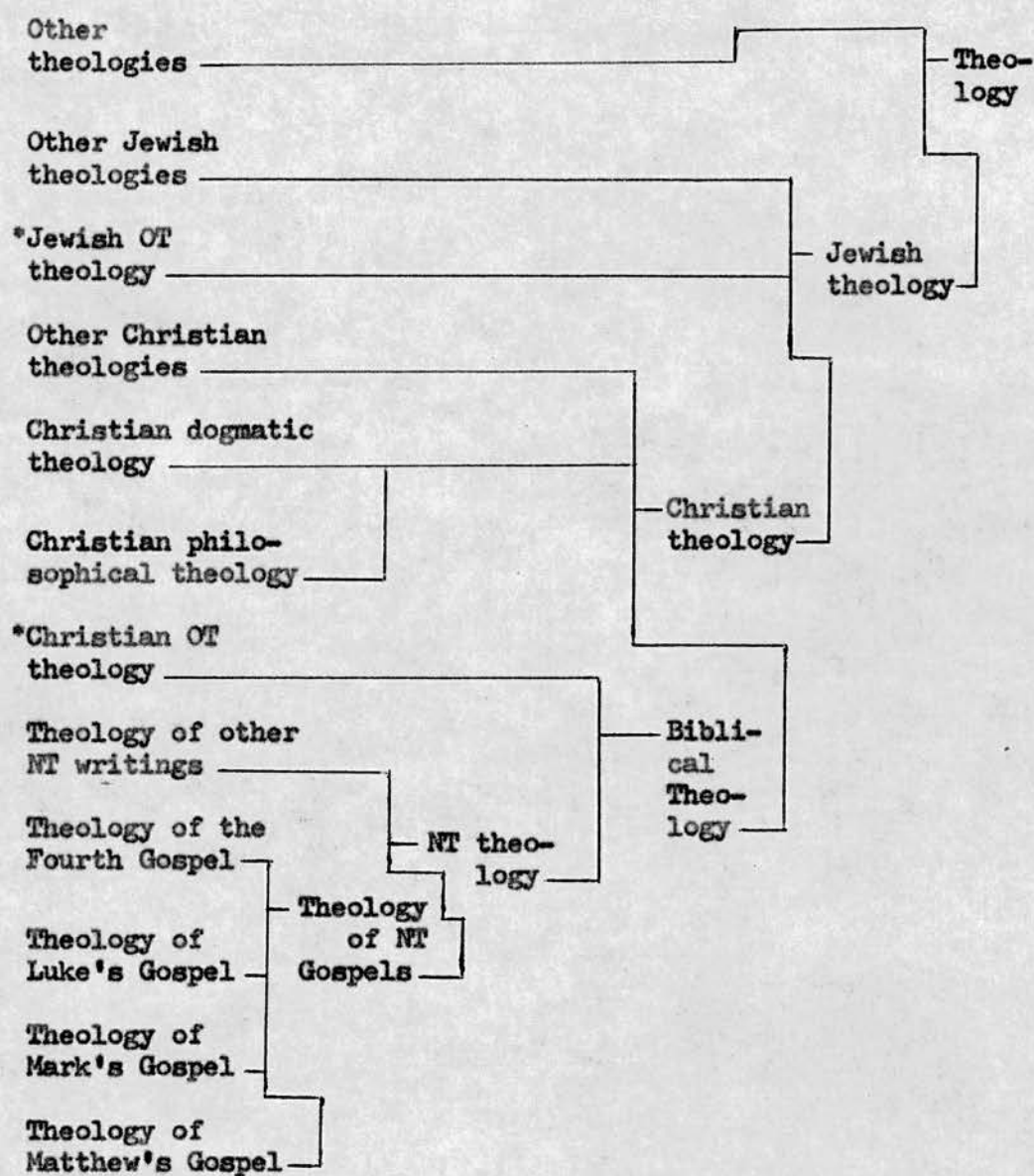
According to Table II, the theology of the Fourth Gospel is a subdivision of the theology of the NT Gospels. The latter is a subdivision of NT theology. NT theology is a subdivision of biblical

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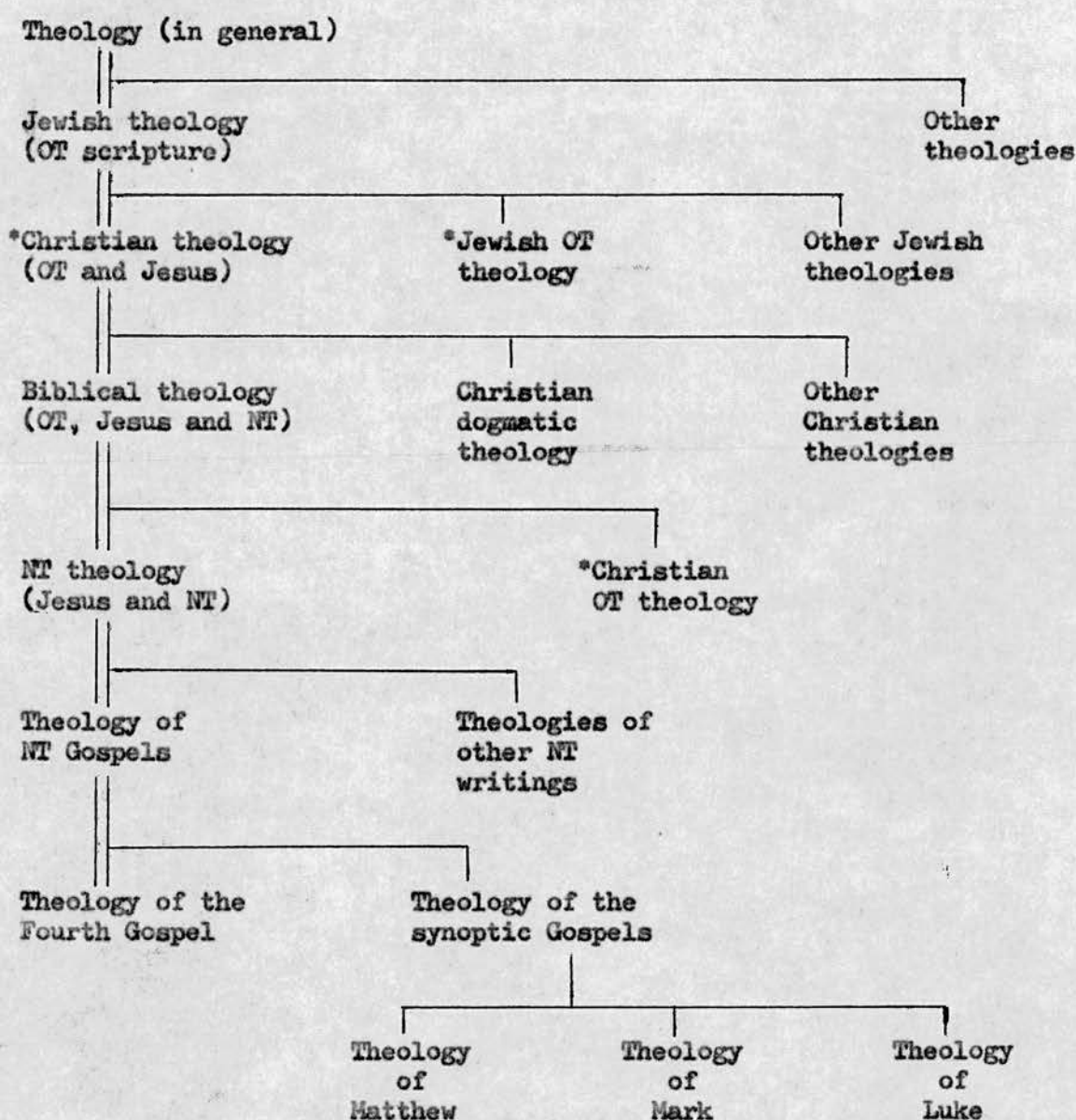
1. The position of Jesus' theology in these various perspectives will be considered on pp.108-110, below.

2. The issue of subject specialisation, field specialisation and book specialisation raises further questions concerning the advantage and disadvantage of compartmentalisation and the pressing need for the unification of contemporary Christian theology.



Table I

Genealogy of the family of  
Christian theology

Table II

Genealogy of the family of  
Christian theology

theology. Biblical theology is a subdivision of Christian theology. It goes without saying that Jewish theology, together with the OT, is the matrix of Christian theology. It should be pointed out again that this arrangement as presented in these two tables is very unsatisfactory from the historical and theological points of view. They are presented here only to be refuted and repudiated. Nevertheless, what concerns us is not that they will be refuted but rather on what ground they will be refuted.<sup>1</sup>

For the arrangement of Table II presupposes the finished product of both the OT and the NT. Ordinary Christians could easily hold the view that the Bible is one book consisting of both the OT and the NT. Further the arrangement presupposes the existence of the established Church and formalised Christian theology. Furthermore, from the viewpoint of the historical origin and development of Christianity and Christian theology, to move chronologically from 'Christian' theology forward to the theology of the Fourth Gospel is not accurate. Chronologically, the 'Jesus' theology, i.e. the 'Jesus-Christian'

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1. Jews and OT scholars may object to the way in which we arbitrarily and naively identify OT theology with Jewish theology. It is true that this is too broad a generalisation and too much an oversimplification. We also admit that this is too biased a representation, biased by the contemporary Christian viewpoint. But this again is, of necessity, for reasons of pragmatic delimitation. For the thesis confines itself to considering the Judaism which was already the 'established, constitutional and institutional' religion at the time of Jesus. It was established, because it was the national religion. It was constitutional, in the sense that the thesis assumes that one of the constitutive elements of Judaism and of Jewish theology at that time was the OT scripture. Lastly, it was institutional, in the sense that the thesis is concerned with the organisation, the life and worship of the Jewish Temple and synagogue during the period from 25-90 A.D. These two Tables are, in fact, presented from the viewpoint of ordinary Christians, rather than from that of a critical historian or of a Christian biblical scholar.



theology, should come immediately after 'Jewish' theology, followed by Christian theology I of the early Church as shown in Table III (p.111).

The double vertical line of Table II (p.107) represents the direct descent of the theology of the Fourth Gospel. All members of the 'theology-family' are concerned with theology. By virtue of being in the same family each member can represent the family as a whole or other members of the family.<sup>1</sup>

By the same token, however, the theology of the Fourth Gospel can and needs to be interpreted and understood within the larger context of the family of theology. This correlation and co-ordination between the family members may be the root of the matter and the reason why we can and need to expound the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel from the standpoint and in the perspective and horizon of Christian biblical theology, which consists of the theology of the Bible as a whole or the correlation between OT and NT theology. This family-tie may be the reason why we can and need to employ the perspective and horizon of Christian theology (wider sense) which

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1. The theology of the Fourth Gospel can represent the theology of the NT Gospels, NT theology, OT theology, biblical theology (i.e. the Bible as a whole) or even to some extent, sc. in some qualified sense, Jewish theology or, from the viewpoint of comparative religion, 'theology' in general. However, the degrees of the credibility with which each, e.g. the theology of the Fourth Gospel, can represent the family as a whole is subject to the following conditions: its status in the family, its current condition, the authority or credentials attributed to it and the situation with which it has to deal, including the people to whom it is written. And these conditions have to be met in actual practice.

consists of the correlation between Christian theology (narrower sense), Christian messianology and Christian anthropology for unfolding the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel.

Let us consider Table III. Here some details are added. The principle of arrangement is both historical and theological. First, the data of theology are bracketed, in a very broad sense, under disciplines such as Jewish theology (God and OT), etc. Second, the relevant dates accompanied by the relevant events are inserted on both sides to indicate matters of historical and theological concern, eg. A.D. 29 or 33 (crucifixion-resurrection), etc.

The striped section is the period that covers forty years between A.D. 25-65. This period is further extended backwards to cover the whole life-span of Jesus (8-6 B.C. to A.D. 29-33) and forwards up to the year A.D. 90, about which time the Fourth Gospel is thought to have been written. Thus the extended period (striped and blank sections) covers about one hundred years.

We are interested in the shorter period (striped section) which covers some forty years, because it is partly known but mostly unknown, and it is the most problematic or controversial period in terms of the scholarship of the Christian gospel traditions of the early Church. It is the period during which the gospel traditions in question were formulated, transmitted or handed down orally(?); Q was supposed to be formulated, composed(?) or edited(?) (A.D. 50?); Paul's letters and some of the other NT letters were written; ... it is the period during which the first written canonical Gospel,

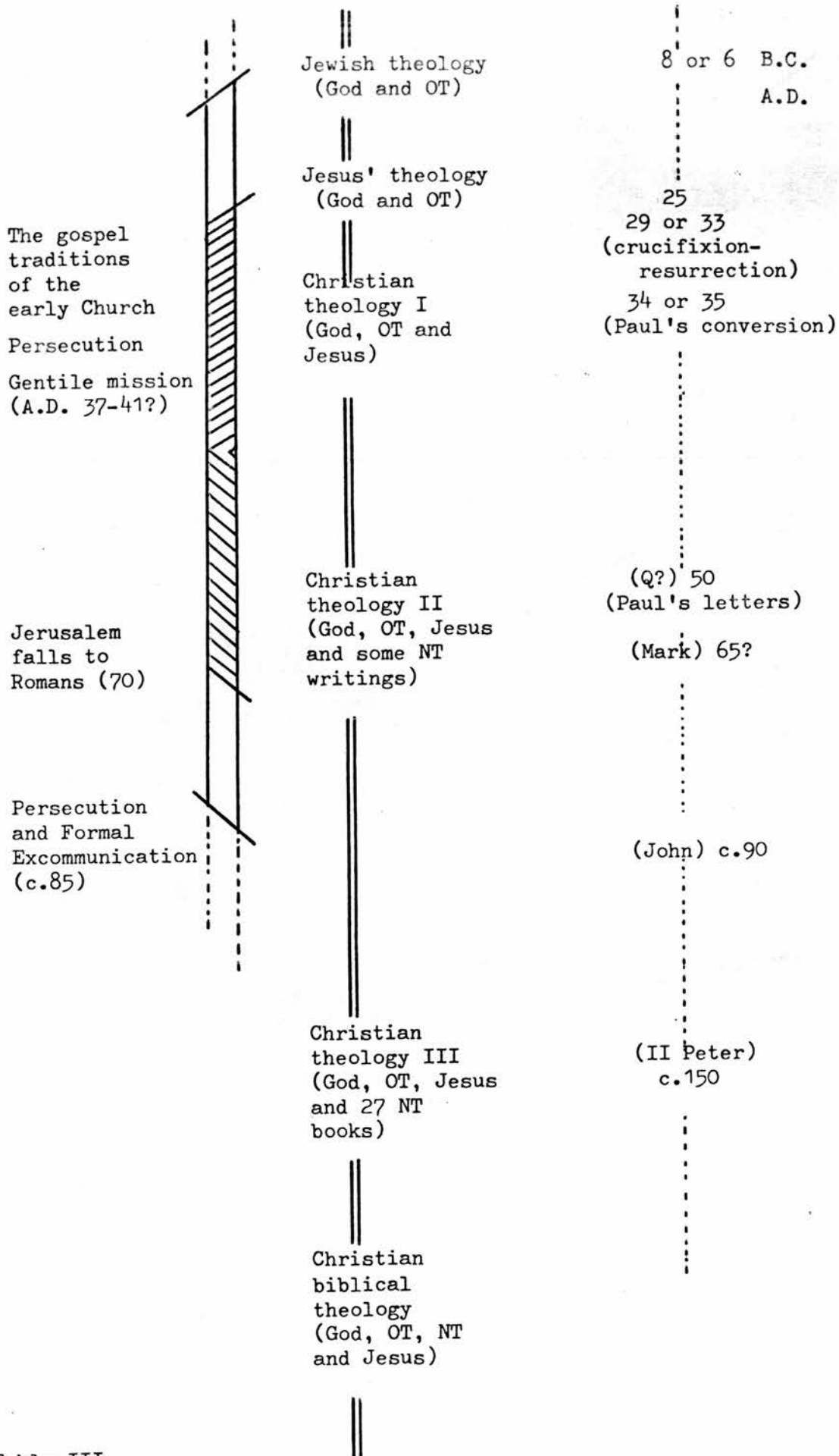


Table III



Mark, was in incubation and finally took shape and was born (A.D.65?).

Our primary intention is to clarify to a very limited extent some historical and theological questions that arise by virtue both of the late date of the Fourth Gospel (c. A.D. 90)<sup>1</sup>, late in comparison with the other canonical Gospels, and of the independence of the Fourth Gospel's gospel-traditions.<sup>2</sup> These two factors are advantageous, because by inquiry into the gospel traditions of the early Church which are incapsulated in the Fourth Gospel or into what has 'gone on' from the period of Jesus' life and ministry, say from A.D. 25, we may be able to interpolate something of the result of our inquiry and findings. The particular question we are concerned with here is how the Fourth Gospel is related to the gospel traditions of the early Church.<sup>3</sup>

Our task now is to take the Fourth Gospel on its own merits and work out a method which will be intelligible and reasonable

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1. For the discussion of date, author and place of origin, see O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle, and R. A. Culpepper, The Johannine School. See also, e.g., the commentaries by C. K. Barrett, R. E. Brown, G. H. C. Macgregor and R. Schnackenburg.

2. v. C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, and many others. This view is becoming the generally accepted view. But see G. Johnston, The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John, who holds an opposite view.

3. Further questions concerning how the NT as a whole or how each of the 27 writings is related to the gospel traditions of the early Church or 'Jesus-Christian' theology, or even further back to the earliest phase of the gospel traditions of the early Church, sc. 'Jesus' theology, are subject-matters which lie beyond the scope of the present study. In effect, we have to bypass these three broader and in some sense important perspectives, sc. (a) the inter-relatedness of the 27 NT writings, (b) the relation of the 27 respective NT writings to the gospel traditions of the early Church, and (c) the relationship between the synoptic type and Johannine type of gospel traditions.

within the confine of the data available in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider, within this confine, the shorter period (A.D. 25-50) during which the gospel traditions of the early Church were formed, or Jewish theology was transmitted and transformed into Christian evangelical theology.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the gospel traditions of the early Church, there are questions critical scholars may like to ask at this point. To what extent and degree did the OT scripture exercise a constitutive force in Judaism during Jesus' life-time and the early period of the 'Jesus-Christian' movement? How and in what way was the binding force of the OT scripture in Judaism transmitted to early Christianity? How, in what way, and by whom was that force transformed to constitute the belief, theology and life of early Christians? An attempt to answer all these questions would be far too great a task for the present thesis.<sup>3</sup> We shall limit ourselves to considering

1. The method adopted here is based upon Collingwood's first principle of a philosophy of history: "that the past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present" (see above, p.26, and footnote 1).

2. This (A.D. 25-50) was the period during which early Christian evangelical theology had emerged and had been in the process of being formulated, consolidated and developed, although one has to allow that this transition period continued for nearly another century or so to the middle of the second century A.D., about which time the last book of the NT canon, II Peter, is thought to have been written. It goes without saying that this change or transition is vital to Christianity, while Judaism continued, though naturally changing and developing, to run its course.

3. The ground we are treading many scholars have been labouring on with varied methods and concerns. v. C. K. Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel", *JTS*, vol.48, 1947, pp.155-69; C. H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures; A. Guilding, The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship, an attempt to assess the relation of the Fourth Gospel to the ancient Palestinian synagogue lectionary system;



T. F. Glasson, Moses in the Fourth Gospel, interprets the Fourth Gospel in the perspective of the Messianic hope in terms of a new Exodus and recognises the Messiah as a second Moses; P. Borgen, Bread from Heaven: An exegetical study of the concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the writings of Philo, in which Borgen deals with sources and traditions, the form and style and origin and interpretation of ideas in Johannine and Philonic research. His study is concentrated around a detailed analysis of a few selected passages, which in turn are expositions of parts of the Old Testament.

E. D. Freed, Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John. W. A. Meeks, The Prophet-King: Moses traditions and the Johannine Christology. Meeks attempts to clarify the way in which the motifs represented by the two terms 'prophet' and 'king' in the Fourth Gospel not only are interrelated, but interpret each other. The investigation involves not only detailed analysis of passages within the Fourth Gospel but also a wide-ranging survey of extra-biblical sources. Meeks draws two general conclusions: the Johannine traditions were shaped, at least in part, by interaction between a Christian community and a hostile Jewish community whose piety accorded very great importance to Moses and the Sinai theophany; and the Johannine Church had drawn members from that Jewish group as well as from the Samaritan circles which held very similar beliefs, and, to a high degree of probability, the depiction of Jesus as prophet and king in the Fourth Gospel owes much to traditions which the Church inherited from Moses.

Finally a note on typological method: Meeks' thesis does not advocate that the Fourth evangelist wished to depict Jesus as a "new Moses", but that from the viewpoint of the Christian Gospel Moses' traditions are to be reinterpreted and that Christians claim that true belief in Moses must lead to belief in Jesus who is the one who indeed fulfills the functions attributed to Moses in a superior and exclusive way.

J. M. Myers, O. Reimherr, H. H. Bream (eds.), Search the Scriptures, pp. 13-74, are essays related to the Fourth Gospel. G. Johnston, in The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John, gives special attention to recent research on the subject mainly in the area of the Dead Sea Scrolls and to the OT background. W. Nicol, in The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction, sees in the semeia an important key to the historical and theological problems of the Fourth Gospel, in that they provide one of the best opportunities to study tradition and redaction in the Gospel by applying the method of literary criticism, which amounts to source criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism, and also gives particular attention to the method of style statistics. S. Pancaro, in The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity according to John, attempts to determine the meaning and function given to the Law by John and the precise role it plays in the theological structure of the Gospel. He argues that the Law appears as a hermeneutical key to John's interpretation of the person and work of Jesus. Special attention is paid to the Jewish background (the OT, the Apocrypha, Qumran and the Rabbinical writings) and the author contends that his work succeeds in establishing the Jewish character of the Gospel more convincingly than the attempts made to date. A. A. Trites, The New Testament Concept of Witness. Trites begins with the examination of the witness and testimony of the NT. This is carried out in the light of ancient legal practice. On John special attention is paid to its juridical character and the 'lawsuit' of Jesus' ministry and the ministry of the post-Easter Church based on the controversy in Isaiah 40-45, a controversy between Yahweh and the world and between Yahweh and Israel.



only one aspect, namely in what ways according to the Fourth Gospel, OT scripture was used by Christians to interpret Jesus, Jewish and the Christian religion, i.e. the Jewish and Christian faith, life and theology.

3. The OT scripture, the word of Jesus, and the formation of the Christian belief and theology of the Fourth Gospel

We shall bear in mind that there are two facts on which we can always base our thinking and reasoning. First, that after Jesus' ministry and death a sect<sup>1</sup> consisting of the followers or disciples of Jesus emerged within Judaism and claimed that they were the true Israel, the true heirs of Jews and Judaism. Second, that 'Jesus-Christian' theology and religion, sc. Christianity, had by then come into being. Employing these two facts, sc. the early Christian community and its theology, and the two data, sc. the OT and the Fourth Gospel, we would probably be able to reconstruct historically and theologically some aspects of the ways in which the transition and transformation from Judaism to Christianity took place.

In this respect, it would be of great importance to learn how the OT scriptures were employed by the Fourth evangelist in his

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1. The Johannine community has been variously designated as sect, circle, or school. See R. A. Culpepper, The Johannine School; and O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle. We designate it sect here, because we are thinking of its incipient stage; it may have developed later into a circle or a school, as Cullmann and Culpepper think, and then became a Church in the proper sense of the term.

presentation of the life and ministry of Jesus. In view of the fact that the Fourth Gospel puts such a great emphasis upon the motif that the OT scripture bears witness to Jesus, and that OT prophecies are fulfilled or realised in the ministry and death of Jesus in the presentation of the Christian gospel, by scrutinising both the 'witness' and the 'fulfilment' motifs in the Gospel we might be able to understand further not only a formal but also a substantial correlation between the OT and the NT, and thereby between Judaism and Christianity.

Our inquiry, therefore, is an inquiry into the comparison between the old Jewish context and the new Christian context within which Jesus was presented to the readers or the world. Our interest is not just the historical but also the theological (wider sense) process and development. In fact, we have seen in the previous chapter that both historical and theological elements are constitutive of the early Church's life, mission and theology, and that it was the theology or the fundamental Christian faith rather than the history that justified or vindicated both the religious practices of the early Church and the theological interpretation of their historical experiences.

The early Church members must have interpreted and used OT scriptures in regulating their beliefs, life and worship. Obviously they employed the scriptures as the authoritative word of God or as texts to vindicate both Jesus' movement and the Christian movement, which were interpreted within the horizon and perspective both of the



theistic world-view and of the theistic salvation history from the standpoint of the believing-understanding of the OT God and with insights and vigour newly acquired through their fresh experiences.

It is very significant to see that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel appealed to the OT scriptures as one of the authoritative witnesses to his claim to be the Son of God (Jn 5.17-47) and the Messiah (1.41, 45). Further, Jesus also used the OT scriptures to confirm the truth and validity of his words (2.17, 22, indirectly), of his signs (12.37-41, the negative effect; cf. also 4.48) and of his divine origin (7.42; cf. 7.26f.; 8.42), to bear testimony to his forthcoming death and resurrection (3.14f., which are associated with the complex idea of 'lifting-up'), and to prophesy the gift and the coming of the Holy Spirit (7.37-39).

It is beyond dispute that during the life time of Jesus and in the incipient stage of the Christian movement, the early Christians did not have the NT. The only scripture they had was the (Jewish) OT.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The mistake which modern Christians are liable to make is to entertain unconsciously the idea that Christian theology had existed at this incipient stage, or to ask the question whether the theology of Jesus was 'Christian' theology, not to mention the question whether Jesus was a 'Christian'. It follows that the arrangement in Table I (p.106) and in Table II (p.107) is wrong in that Christian theology was not able<sup>to</sup> enjoy such a superior position historically and theologically at the incipient stage of the 'Jesus-Christian' movement. Since none of the NT writings existed before A.D. 50, not to mention the NT as a whole, none of them could have been the source, far less the basis, of the early Church's theology and movement. In other words, at this stage biblical theology, sc. the kind of theology which is based upon<sup>a</sup> one volume book, did not exist at all. A more likely picture of the situation may be something like this: that it was during this period between A.D. 25 and 65 that early Christian gospel traditions or theologies were formulated and crystallised as we see today in some of the extant NT writings, e.g. in Paul's letters and other letters and in the Gospel according to Mark, though some other NT writings were yet to be written.



Moreover, if we can appreciate the process in which the historical, religious and theological transformation took place within Judaism during Jesus' life time and at the incipient stage of the early Christian movement within Judaism, we probably can apprehend better the paramount significance of the ways in which the Jewish book, the OT, was handled and used by different parties as presented in the Fourth Gospel.

As an illustration, let us take the story of Jesus' cleansing the Temple, as it is re-interpreted and reconstructed by the evangelist (2.13-22). The significant point of this gospel-story is recorded in the parenthetical explanation in vv.21f. It is this: Jesus' word is juxtaposed with the Jewish scripture as the object of the belief of Jesus' disciples. The text reads, "... they believed the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken." The implication is this, that Jesus' word was, now in the Christian context, enjoying the same authoritative position and the same constitutive and effective significance as the OT scripture was in the Jewish context. This was certainly a great leap or transformation from Jewish to Christian religious belief and practice.

We may call this an intermediate phase during which both the OT scriptures and Jesus' words enjoyed equal authority, the same constitutive force in matters with respect to the belief of the Jewish Christians.

But by the would-be disciples, the anti-Christian Jews and the Jewish crowd, whether well disposed, indifferent or hostile, the OT scriptures were not viewed or interpreted as they were by the Christian Jews. For a certain length of time in the early phase of

the 'Jesus-Christian' movement the OT scripture must have enjoyed an exclusive and prime position in Judaism. However, the change took place.

During Jesus' public ministry, his words and deeds must have gained acceptance. His person and authority, vindicated by his words (teachings) and deeds (signs), must have gained weight and gradually outweighed the authority which the Jews assigned to OT scripture. Consequently, the balance between OT scripture and Jesus' word was entirely reversed after the time when the Christian movement no longer was able to be accommodated within the matrix of the Jewish synagogue. However, it would be a mistake to entertain the idea that, conversely, the authority of OT scripture had been scaled down in proportion to the scaling up of Jesus' authority within the Christian religious and theological context. In fact, according to the witness of NT writings and particularly of the canonical Gospels, Jesus and the early Christians never looked down on the OT scripture, because for them the OT was the law of God, given through Moses (John 1.17) and enhanced by divine sanction. How could the early Christians show contempt for their origin and roots? The early Church not only had esteem for the OT but also interpreted it, i.e. sought to understand it, exercised their judgement upon it, made decisions and took the extraordinary step of basing their argument upon OT scripture, to confirm as well as to present the person, words and deeds, life and death of the man Jesus from the Christian standpoint.

Following the foregoing discussion, we may be able to go a step further to imagine and detect from the study of the Fourth Gospel that the gospel traditions about the history and theology of

Jesus, sc. the man and his thoughts, were handed down and re-interpreted and reconstructed, for practical reasons, in the light of Christians' fresh experiences in various new and different situations. For the Christian movement and community were in need of being constituted and reconstituted anew, and of being kept alive and developed further, or the movement and the community would decline.

The history and theology of Jesus, therefore, as handed down, were inevitably blended with or incapsulated in the various phases of new historical, religious and theological development of different Christian communities in different localities; the result of this blending or incapsulation, which inevitably included changes, additions and omissions, were the four canonical Gospels and various non-canonical Gospels, as we know them today.<sup>1</sup>

If we are right in assuming that the oral gospel traditions existed and that Christians re-interpreted and reconstructed them at different times, in different places, through different authors and/or editors, for different purposes and in various situations and conditions, in order to meet their varying needs and purposes, we should expect that there would be some similarities and dissimilarities among their works. Nevertheless, we also have to admit at once that our historical knowledge about these places, times, authors, communities, needs, purposes, etc. are ascertainable only approximately and, in fact, some of them, especially those concerned with the Fourth Gospel, such as the identity of the Fourth evangelist,

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1. cf. C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, pp. 150f.



the community, and their historical situations, are very difficult to picture at all, far less to know with certainty.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of the re-interpretation and hence of the reconstruction of the gospel traditions is the issue of the origin, identity and destiny of Christianity, the Christian community and Christian faith. This is true for individuals as well as for communities. The opposite is also true, that the question of the origin, identity and destiny is the question of the re-interpretation and reconstruction of the man Jesus, his life and ministry, his death and theology - in short, the Christian gospel traditions or the various Christian Gospel-lives of Jesus of the early Church. For without the man and his thought, sc. his history and theology, the Christian movement, religion, theology, life and faith could not find their identity, origin, and hence destiny, purpose and goal. Just as the Jews would find in the OT, Abraham, Jacob, Law, Temple, Sabbath observation, Festivals, etc. their own identity, origin and destiny, so now Christians would find their identity, origin and destiny in the man Jesus and his theology, etc., etc. While every man has his own historical and anthropological origin, identity, and destiny, so every religion has its own historical, theological and anthropological origin, identity and destiny.

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1. cf. E. Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus, pp.1-3, "The Problem";  
 O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle;  
 R. A. Culpepper, The Johannine School;  
 C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel.  
 Many commentaries discuss these issues.

#### 4. The formation and emergence of the Fourth Gospel

The task now is to detect in more concrete terms how the Fourth evangelist re-interpreted

- (a) the early Church's gospel traditions and
- (b) the OT scripture,

to confirm, identify and strengthen the Christian belief and life of his contemporaries. We also have to reckon with

- (c) the new historical, religious and theological situations or contexts in which the evangelist had found himself and his believing community.

These three matters among others seem to have contributed to the formation and emergence of the Fourth Gospel.

If what has been observed up to now in the present thesis is intelligible and reasonable, what may be envisaged at this juncture are some aspects of the historical, religious and theological developments of the Christian community to which the evangelist belonged round the period A.D. 65-90, i.e., five years before the Fall of Jerusalem to the year when the Fourth Gospel is supposed to have been written and completed. These developments may become clearer in the process of unfolding the difference between the Christian views and the Jewish views on these three factors which are in a distinction within unity correlation:

- (a) on the gospel traditions of the early Church, i.e. the interpretations of the man Jesus, his life and death, his belief and theology;
- (b) on the OT scripture, i.e. the interpretations of God, OT history and theology;
- (c) on the fresh experiences of the evangelist and his contemporaries, i.e. the interpretations of contact and conflict between the Christian movement within Judaism, between Christian Jews and non-Christian Jews, in the newly emerged historical, religious and theological contexts.

Let us consider (a) and (b) in the light of (c).

- (1) The evangelist's re-interpretation of the early Church's gospel traditions in the light of his fresh experiences and those of his contemporaries

If we are to think and reflect upon the development or the processes in which the Fourth evangelist re-interpreted and reconstructed the early Church's gospel traditions, which he must have done if he wrote his Gospel in c.A.D. 90, we have to postulate at least some historical phases which extended from the year A.D. 25



to the year A.D. 90. How can we divide these phases?<sup>1</sup> The approach taken here is that the independent development from the early Church's gospel traditions to the Fourth Gospel has to be assumed, independent from the other canonical Gospels.

A crucial step in our inquiry is that some hypothetical gospel traditions of the early Church which were the basis of the evangelist's re-interpretation have to be assumed. The hypothetical gospel traditions, therefore, are the ones which we detect to be embedded in the present extant Gospel, sc. the Fourth Gospel.<sup>2</sup> By working backwards, we may be able to reconstruct the development of the gospel traditions of the early Church during the whole period between A.D. 25-90. However, as we stated earlier, what we are concerned with here is the shorter period A.D. 25-50. Let us specify this delimitation.

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1. Various attempts have been made, e.g. R. E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, (i-xii), pp.XXIV-XL. He proposes five stages in the composition of the Fourth Gospel. cf. R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel According to St. John, vol.I, Eng. tr., chap.IV, "Tradition and Redaction", pp.59-74; R. A. Culpepper, The Johannine School, chap.I, "The Johannine-school hypothesis", pp.1-38; O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle, chap.I, "The Literal Unity, Sources and Redaction of the Gospel of John", pp.1-11. Current opinion regarding the historical phases of the development of traditions in redaction criticism shows wide agreement on the view that the extant Gospel of John is the work of both an evangelist and a redactor. The approach which is taken in the present thesis aims at clarification of the role played by the Jews, Jesus and Jesus' disciples in the three, 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian', successive, related, yet qualitatively different phases of historical and theological transition and transformation from Judaism to Christianity, from Jewish (OT) theology to Christian theology.

2. " ... the last words must always lie with one's verdict on the text of John itself, with the analysis of its thought and language." (R. Schnackenburg, op.cit., p.120). Although these words are used in a different context from ours, they are not inappropriate to our discussion.

The year A.D. 25 is the initial year for the formation of the gospel traditions of the early Church in the earlier phase, because we have to allow some years to have elapsed before the year (c.A.D. 28) when Jesus began his public ministry. What we have in mind specifically are both Jewish theology and the part of Jesus' religious life and thought which preceded his public ministry. The year A.D. 50 is the year about which Q was supposed to exist (if this hypothesis is accepted, that means about twenty years before both Luke's and Matthew's Gospels are thought to have been written), it is the year Paul's first letters I (and II?) Thessalonians, were written. It is also about fifteen years before the year about which the first Christian Gospel, Mark, is supposed to have been written (c.A.D. 65). However, two matters are noteworthy: that Mark's Gospel had run a course independent of Q and that Mark's Gospel was used by Luke and Matthew as the major source, structure and form for the composition of their Gospels. Luke and Matthew had re-interpreted Mark's Gospel, and the Q gospel traditions which must have existed before the hypothetically constructed Q, and other gospel traditions, if there were such and if they could be identified.

But the situation with Mark's and John's Gospels is different. For while Luke's and Matthew's Gospels have common identifiable sources, Mark's and John's Gospels have no easily recoverable gospel traditions which are prior and common to them.

Within this hypothetical limit, we shall further assume that during this earlier period, between A.D. 25-50, the earlier phase



of the gospel traditions has emerged. Once the earlier phase has been hypothetically differentiated, we may postulate the later phases (the period from the year A.D. 50 onwards) which developed out of the earlier phase of the gospel traditions.

Diagram I (p.128) will show these two sets of preceding and succeeding historical phases. Again, what concerns us is the first set, the earlier phase, some aspects of which we have already considered in pp.108-118; see also Table III on p.111.

It is important to remember that by hypothetically distinguishing 'Jesus' theology from Christian theology within the compound 'Jesus-Christian' theology, we are able to assert that Christian theology of the compound 'Jesus-Christian' theology is already an interpretation of 'Jesus' theology or an interpretation of Jesus-events, i.e. a re-interpretation of the gospel traditions.<sup>1</sup> The Christian theology in question is, therefore, the third phase of the 'Judaeo-Jesus-Christian' theology.

Thus it is clear that the reconstructed gospel traditions of the early Church which we construct out of the data embedded in the Fourth Gospel can refer to or mean the Johannine type of Christian theology I, which pertains to the Johannine type of gospel tradition I, and only indirectly refers to 'Jesus-Christian' theology. This is because the Johannine type of Christian theology or gospel tradition

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1. v. P. J. Achtemeier (ed.), Society of Biblical Literature 1978 Seminar Papers, vol.II, S 276 "Criteria For a Study of the Outlines of Mark and John", by E. F. Glusman, Jr.; S 277 "Common Elements in the Outlines of Mark and John", by A. H. Maynard; and S 278 "Creative Rewriting: Key to a New Methodology", by L. T. Brodie.



represents only one strand of the 'Jesus-Christian' gospel traditions. Nevertheless, after the appearance of the Fourth Gospel, the ensuing centuries were greatly influenced by the theological questions (wider sense) raised by the Fourth Gospel, the Synoptic Gospels and the NT as a whole. This resulted in the great christological controversies.

The item "theologies of the early Church fathers"<sup>1</sup> is added in Diagram II (p.<sup>129</sup>) to show some aspects of the further developments during the ensuing centuries after the Fourth Gospel had been written. Thus Diagram II shows the three phases, sc. the earlier phase (A.D. 25-50), the later phase (A.D. 50-90) and the further phase (A.D. 90 onwards), of the Johannine type of the development of the Christian theology of the early Church. We call them respectively as follows:

Phase I. The Johannine type of Christian theology I.

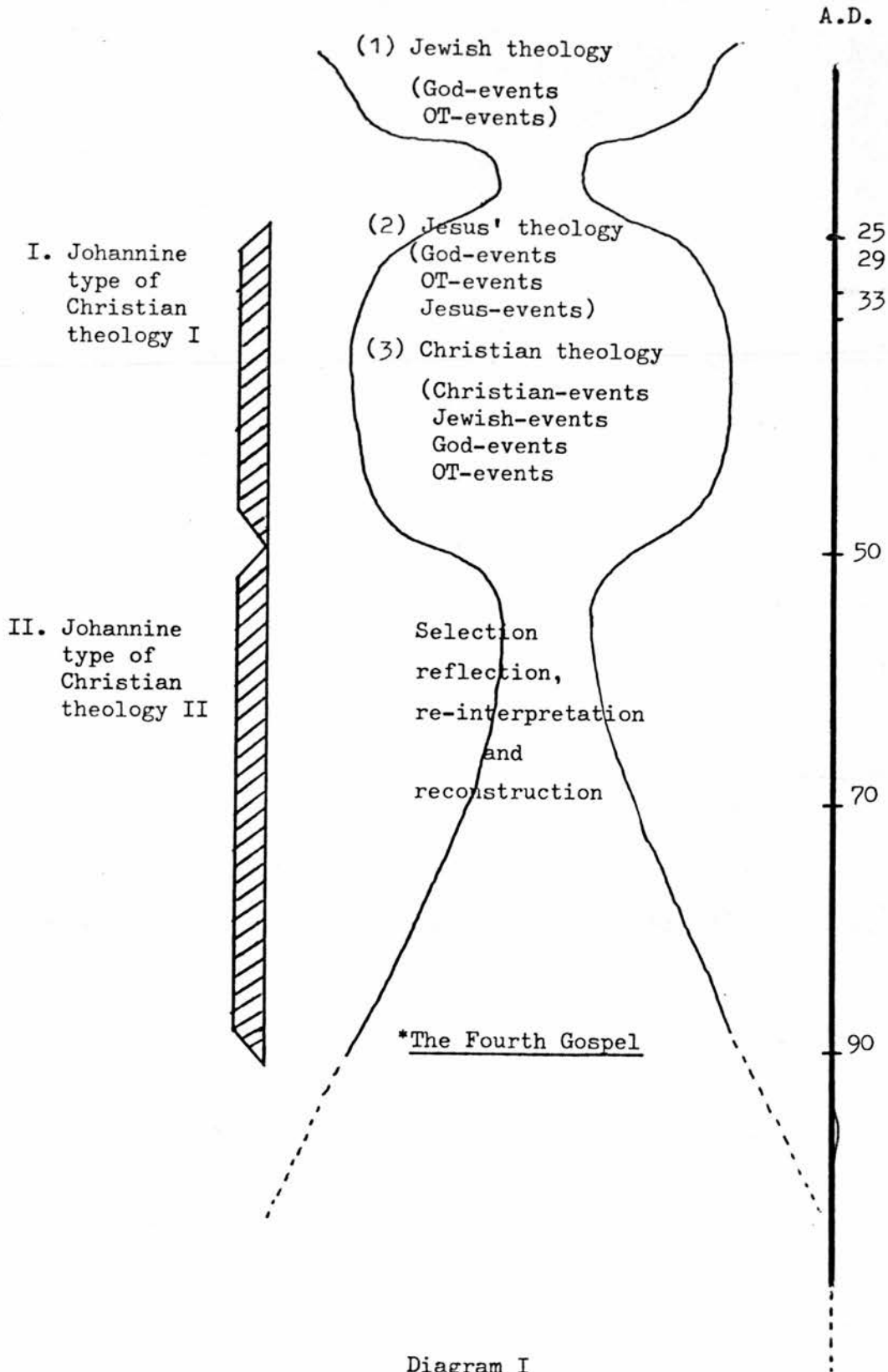
This includes the Johannine type of gospel tradition I, sc. the compound of 'Jesus' and 'Christian' theology - the first, i.e. the earlier, phase.

Phase II. The Johannine type of Christian theology II.

This includes the Johannine type of gospel tradition II, sc. the compound of the second, i.e. the later, phase of 'Jesus' and 'Christian' theology.

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1. v. C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St John, "The Gospel in the development of theology", pp.62-66, and "The Gospel in the Church", pp.109-115; S. Schnackenburg, op.cit., has more extensive treatment in chap.X, "The Fourth Gospel in History" (from the second century to modern times); see also his discussion of "Tendencies in Present-day Exegesis", pp.192-217.



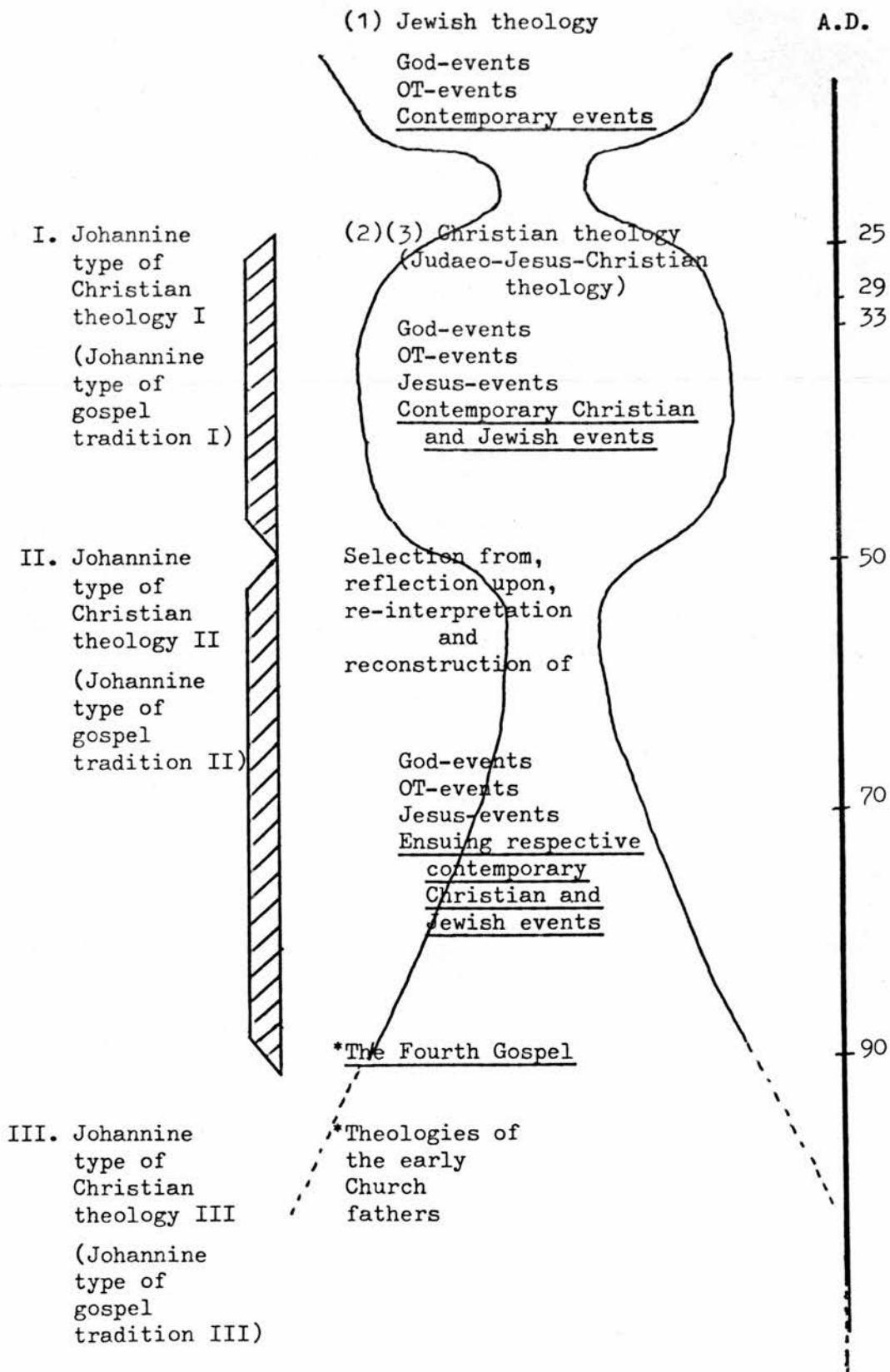


Diagram II



Phase III. The Johannine type of Christian theology III.

This includes the Johannine type of gospel tradition III, sc. the compound of the third, i.e. the further, phase in the ensuing theological development from 'Jesus-Christian' theology (the theology of the Fourth Gospel) to the theologies of the early Church fathers.

Just as the early Church fathers had to deal with the questions raised by the Fourth Gospel, so, too, the Fourth evangelist had to deal with the questions raised by the gospel traditions of the early Church. Thus within that 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian' theology or Johannine gospel traditions we include God-events, OT-events, Jesus-events and contemporary Christian and Jewish events of respective Christian generations.

At this point we have introduced a new element or a new term, 'event' into our discussion; it is therefore added to Diagram II. But this is simply because in dealing with the OT or the Christian gospel traditions, we have to deal with events and stories, confessions, concepts and terms. Our task remains to examine how these events and elements are interpreted differently by Christians and by Jews in the Fourth Gospel. To this, we now turn.

Let us note, at once, that in the transition process from Jewish theology to Christian theology, there was a shift or change of standpoints, from one which gave exclusive authority to the OT to one which gave eminent or central authority to Jesus' word. In

terms of persons, this shift or transition was from Moses to Jesus.<sup>1</sup>  
 The standpoint of the Fourth Gospel seems quite clear. It is this:  
 " ... the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through  
 Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the  
 bosom of the Father, he made him known." (1.17f.).<sup>2</sup>

We have thus far primarily considered the continuity between  
 how the Christian movement originated in the matrix of Jesus'  
 theology and further how Jesus' theology originated and was formed  
 in the matrix of the Jewish theology. We must now consider the  
 question of how the Christian movement was broken off from Judaism.  
 Contemporary Christians may not find this an extraordinary issue.

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1. Some other items of transition could be included, e.g. from Jewish Temple to the temple of Jesus' body (2.19-22), from King of the Jews to King of Israel (1.49; 12.13; 18 and 19), from Jewish Messiah to Christian Messiah (1.41; 12.32-34; etc.), from Jewish God to Christian God (8.12-59), etc. However, we are only concerned here with the transition from the Jewish interpretation of OT scriptures and Law to Christian interpretation. See T. F. Glasson, Moses in the Fourth Gospel; P. Borgen, Bread from Heaven; W. A. Meeks, The Prophet-King, and "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism", JBL, 91, 1972, pp.44-72, (for the Son of man Christology); G. Johnston, The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John, (for the understanding of the Spirit of God to the NT and John's understanding of the Spirit of God and of Jesus); W. Nicol, The Sēmeia in the Fourth Gospel, (for the Johannine redaction of the Sēmeia tradition); and S. Pancaro, The Law in the Fourth Gospel.

2. S. Pancaro, in Ibid., sees 1.17 as one of the keys for interpreting the Gospel. We also see in this verse the Christian understanding of the Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity. In fact we take the verse as a point of departure as well as the content of our discussion, see below, p. 139.

However, it was a life-and-death issue to the believers of the early Church (cf. 16.2-4), especially for those who confessed their belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.<sup>1</sup>

The Fourth evangelist, among other evangelists of the canonical Gospels, took care to present this point in his Gospel. The tense situation between Christian believers and Jewish authorities or the authorities of the Jewish synagogue can be imagined from the vivid depiction of the persecution, of the pressure on the parents, and finally of the ex-communication of the man born blind and healed by Jesus (Jn 9.); also the several occurrences of the phrase, '... for fear of the Jews' (7.13; 9.22; 19.38 and 20.19) and '... because of the Pharisees' (14.42). Though there were ordinary friendly Jews (11.19, 31, 33, 36, 45) and those who followed or even believed in Jesus (8.31), hostility, disbelief and unwillingness to believe were the general attitude of the Jews, and eventually the evangelist had to quote Isaiah, which is in accord with the gospel tradition, and say, "though he (Jesus) had done many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him" (12.37). However, the evangelist also had to say, "Nevertheless many even of

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1. cf. J. L. Martyn, op.cit.; S. Pancaro, op.cit., pp.244-253; and many others have pointed this out. However, A. A. Trites, though he has discussed it as one of the Sitze im Leben, does not make a strong case for it in his book, The New Testament Concept of Witness. R. Schnackenburg, op.cit., pp.121-135, discusses the OT and its influence in John and contemporary Judaism in three areas, sc. Hellenistic, Pharisaic and Rabbinic, and Heterodox (Qumran) Judaism. In excommunication and conflict he sees a factor for understanding the historical situation of the evangelist's time, "though this does not necessarily obscure the historical level (the time of Jesus) ... No far-reaching conclusions may be drawn from this, however, with regard to the origins and formation of the author." Ibid., (p.128).



the authorities believed in him, but for the fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (12.42). In other words, we are concerned with persecution, excommunication and schism.<sup>1</sup>

There are two critical questions to be asked: the question whether the events recorded in the Gospel were those of Jesus' time or of the evangelist's time, and the question of the historicity of the events. These are questions pertaining to the critical history of the Christian gospel traditions. They have to be answered historically, for the answers have to come from historical research and inquiry, historical judgement and understanding. The second question, that of historicity, is a much harder one, because of lack of source material and evidence. The first one it is possible for us to answer, because we can work backwards from the extant source, the Fourth Gospel, and hypothetically reconstruct the transition process or the various successive, related but qualitatively different historical phases of the transformation and

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1. The picture we have drawn is based upon the Fourth Gospel. The question is, Was he an eye-witness of the transition process of the 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian' belief and Theology? Or was what is presented in the Gospel some sort of reflective picture of Christian origin, identity and of what Christianity ought to be? Surely, from what we have considered, we should not put the question in terms of either first-hand or second-hand, i.e. direct or indirect, testimony to the transition process. Since the transition process in question took place between A.D. 25-90, the picture presented in the Gospel should be seen rather as the result of interpretations of his own personal fresh experiences and reflection on the transition process of the 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian' belief and theology in the light of the fresh experience of his contemporaries. What we are attempting is a kind of hypothetical reconstruction.

transition of the 'Judaean-Jesus-Christian' Theology.<sup>1</sup> However, at this point we must distinguish between the ordinary or preliminary, and critical and advanced, ways of investigating the history and theology of the Christian gospel traditions which are embedded in the Fourth Gospel.

The first way is to follow the evangelist's thought and argument in order to understand the book as it is presented to readers. This presupposes that thoughts and events presented in the Gospel were both historically and theologically conceived by the evangelist. Further, if we follow the first way of studying the Gospel, we implicitly or tacitly accept the standpoints, horizons, perspectives, presuppositions and aspirations of the evangelist's conceptual structure, i.e. we move, think and reason within the boundary of his thought-world.

Certainly, sensitive critics cannot be silent any more. They will raise questions and oppositions. For this is not how ordinary scholars or Christians read the Gospel, many of whom will read and study it from their own standpoints, since everyone has his own standpoints, horizons, perspectives, presuppositions and aspirations,

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1. The issue is both historical and theological. This has been suggested again and again in the present thesis. How history and theology are integrated or compounded in the presentation of the Fourth Gospel is the second-stage question to be considered in chap.III.

etc. Indeed, we cannot escape from our own subjectivity.<sup>1</sup>

But is it not true that if we are to understand the Gospel, we must understand it as the evangelist did, i.e. understand it from his standpoint? This in turn means that we have to see, think, reason and believe as he did. We may quarrel about the historical truth and theological meaning of minor and/or major events, or of concepts and ideas. But what is the most basic standpoint, horizon and perspective of the evangelist?

His faith standpoint - the incarnation and resurrection faith, his horizon thereon - the theistic world-view, and his perspective - the theistic salvation history: these are the most basic and the most problematic in the discourse of Christian evangelical theology.<sup>2</sup> The question is, Are we to take the first way, sc. to follow the evangelist's thoughts and arguments? Or can we take another, sc. a more critical and advanced way?<sup>3</sup>

1. The place of human subjectivity in Christian theological discourse has been openly affirmed. To mention just two examples: R. Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, Eng.tr., "Introduction: View-point and Method", pp.3-15; N. Perrin, "The Challenge of New Testament Theology Today", in R. Batey (ed.), New Testament Issues, chap.I. Perrin begins with these words, "The paper is an attempt to present ... the challenge of the current discussion in New Testament theology as I see it. It is concerned with New Testament theology because it is the theological aspect of New Testament studies ... and it is concerned with New Testament theology as I see it because I can only present a challenge to you that I personally have felt, and feel." (p.15, the underlined words are in italics). However, the correlation or boundary between personal subjectivity and scientific objectivity has yet to be considered or reasoned out more clearly. But this is an issue outside the scope of the present study.

2. See above, pp.78-83, on the need of going beyond the boundary of the evangelist's thought-world, if one is to make a critical study of the Fourth Gospel. Further, see chap.III, below.

3. Whether the first, ordinary or preliminary, way, or the second, critical and more advanced, way, each way subsumes and contains kaleidoscopic subdivided ways of witnessing-believing-understanding in one's task of interpretation and communication of the Gospel-life of Jesus.



Let us investigate how the evangelist proceeded in writing his Gospel. He had to re-interpret the gospel traditions of the early Church within which are incapsulated the traditions of the Jesus-events, of the OT events and the contemporary events of the earlier Christians and of the earlier Christian communities. He also had to interpret his own experiences and those of Christians contemporary with himself. Can we distinguish these events and experiences which contributed to the transition process of the gospel traditions?

As soon as we take this critical approach we are embarking by means of analogical inquiry into, or comparative study of, at least five layers of human experience. They are the experience of the OT authors, Jesus, earlier Christians, the evangelist and Christians today. This can be called the comparative study of human experiences. The source materials are the OT for the OT authors' experiences, the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels for Jesus' experiences, the earlier Christians' and the Fourth evangelist's experiences, and our own self-conscious reflection on our own experiences, and contemporary writers' analysis and explanation of human experiences.

Nevertheless, we shall confine our inquiry to the OT quotations in the Fourth Gospel, the Fourth Gospel itself and our own experiences. In fact, we are using the Fourth Gospel as source material for studying the evangelist's believing-understanding, in articulating his own experiences of God, the OT, Jesus and Christian fellowship in his contemporary world and those of the Christian community to which he belonged.

We say his (the evangelist's) own experiences, because within his theistic world-view and his view of salvation history, these, both persons and elements, sc. God, the OT, Jesus and the Christian fellowship, may be the source materials available to him for writing his Gospel. However, since in the actual operation he had to reflect upon both what he was about to write and what he had already written, these source materials, his work of construction, composition and editing could have been the object of his reflection, and the data on which he exercised his judgement.

If we accept his ways of thinking and reasoning we have to follow the ways of his judgement; but by accepting his judgements we are at the same time exercising our own judgement. This double or compound judgement may be called a critical approach to, or a more advanced study of the Gospel. In this sense we are able to see in our operation a double or compound reflection, sc. a reflection upon the evangelist's judgement and articulation of his experiences, and another reflection upon our own judgement and articulation of our own experiences. Moreover, we may also be able to imagine that when the evangelist was composing his Gospel he too had to exercise this double or compound reflection.

Notwithstanding this complexity, the Gospel of the evangelist

or Christianity according to the Fourth Gospel is about Christian belief and life,<sup>1</sup> it is not just a philosophical pursuit or a metaphysical exercise. We are here not minimising the importance of the insight into the correlation between theory and practice, philosophy and religion, or logic and ethics. In this empirical and critical approach, our primary concern is more than just the articulation of Christian doctrines, beliefs or experiences. The primary concern is to clarify as well as to bear witness to the authentic, i.e. experienced, understood, and judged to be authentic Christian believing, living and acting in each individual, each community and the world as a whole. Hence historical and theological interpretation and understanding of Christians' believing, living and acting should be included in a contemporary Christian's interpretation and construction of the early Church's gospel traditions.<sup>2</sup>

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1. v. E. F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel, chap.XII, "Summary and Conclusion"; E. C. Hoskyns (F. N. Davay, ed.), The Fourth Gospel, 2nd ed., "Introduction: I. The Problem of the Fourth Gospel", "... The two themes which form the ground-base of the whole book - The Word of God and Eternal Life - refuse to be simply dissolved in the ideas of the author or merely identified with his peculiar spiritual experience .... Whatever the Fourth Gospel may be, it is not a text-book of metaphysics ..." pp.17-20; R. Bultmann, op.cit., vol.2, Part III, Chap.IV, "Faith as Eschatological Existence", pp.70-92; R. Schnackenburg, op.cit., vol.1, "... The task now urgently imposed by present-day problems is to study the peculiar nature of the Gospels as historico-kerygmatic accounts of the work of Jesus. More precisely, it is to examine the intermingling of the historically relevant and kerygmatically challenging, according to the intention of the evangelists." (pp.24f.); B. Lindars, op.cit., "Introduction: 1. The central message of the Fourth Gospel", pp.24f., and 10, "The permanent value of the Fourth Gospel", pp.63-66. "If the Fourth Gospel lends itself to re-interpretation in existential terms, it means that the experience which it contains is not necessarily tied to a rigid doctrinal frame, but can be the common property of all who are seekers after truth ... In the Prologue John says: 'No one has ever seen God'. To us today this represents more than a rabbinic dogmatic position. It represents uncertainty of life and of the future. But John has an affirmation to make in the same breath: 'The only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known'. And in the chapters which follow he draws out of the reader the response of faith, which leads to a new dimension of hope as he discovers the meaning of life in Christ." (pp.65f.).

2. See Appendix I, How normative is the Fourth Gospel?



- (2) The evangelist's re-interpretation of the OT scripture in the light of his own fresh experiences and those of his contemporaries

We shall consider now how the Fourth evangelist employed the OT scripture in his presentation of the Christian gospel. For this purpose we have first to determine a common standpoint and some presuppositions held both by the Jews and by the early Christians in regard to the historical, theological and religious believing-understanding of the OT scripture during the first century A.D. This determination is possible, because Judaism had been the matrix of the 'Jesus-Christian' religion and theology.

When we scrutinise the quotations from the OT in the Gospel, whether expressly stated or not, we find ourselves involved not only in the texts which refer to 'the OT scripture' or 'the scripture', but also in the texts which refer to 'the law of Moses', 'it is written in the prophets' or 'the word spoken by the prophet, Isaiah, and to 'as is written'. Further, we shall have to be involved in the related texts which refer to 'commandment', 'word', 'work' or 'sign', and 'judgement', etc. This scrutinising operation will become fairly complex. However, we shall begin from the general and simple statement of the evangelist in the prologue, which represents his basic standpoint, that "the law was given through Moses ..." (1.17a).

The recognition and affirmation by Christians in the early Church of the idea that the law was given through Moses had paramount significance in what the evangelist had to say in the Gospel, because this idea was common ground for both the Jews and the early Christians,

so that the evangelist was able to employ it as a primary witnessing-believing-understanding which would serve as a point of departure in the presentation of his Gospel-life of Jesus.

Both the Jews and early Christians believed that the law of Moses was given by God. Although, on the common sense level of understanding, the ordinary Jews might think and say, 'Moses gave the law', as the evangelist wrote in John 7.19, "Did not Moses give you the law?" strictly speaking, God was the one who gave the law to Israel through Moses. For God spoke to Moses (9.29) and the law was written. God was the law-giver. That is to say, the law of Moses was divinely approved or sanctioned.<sup>1</sup>

Because of this ratification or sanction of the law by God, the constitutive authority and binding force among the Jews of the law of Moses was immeasurably enhanced. To the Jews, therefore, the law of Moses was the word of God par excellence. The constitutive authority and the binding force of scripture remained always the same. The evangelist says, "... scripture cannot be broken" (10.35b). This means that the law or the scripture was "the authoritative revelation from God, given through Moses, declaring the care of God for His people and demands He makes upon them."<sup>2</sup>

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1. The question of how the law was given by God or how God spoke to Moses we cannot answer historically, in the sense that we cannot answer the question in what manner the actual delivery of the law was made. However, for a fruitful discussion of the significance of the sanction of God on social legislation considered within its cultural and political background, see David Daube, The Exodus Pattern in the Bible, pp.11-17.

2. v. W. Barclay (ed.), The Bible and History, p.262. The Fall of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70 reinforced as well as accelerated the already existing tendency of the development of Judaism towards a religion of study of and observance of the Law. The constitutive authority and binding force of the Law, therefore, among the Jews had remained intact. See also S. Pancaro, op.cit., pp.493-497.

Hence it was the duty of all the Jews to study and obey the law. The evangelist could have the Pharisees say, " ... this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed" (7.49).

For to understand the law was to know the will of God and to practise the law was to do the will of God.<sup>1</sup> The law of Moses, then, had behind it the unquestionable authority of God. This was the common witnessing-believing-understanding of the Jewish people in regard to their civil and religious life. This common view of the law, therefore, is constitutive of their racial, national and religious identity. The way of life which was in accord with the law not only was right and meaningful but also was acceptable to God and to their fellow Jews.

Next, we come to consider the OT scripture which bore precise testimony to Jesus. We might call this the 'testimony to Jesus' motif in the Fourth Gospel. This motif is closely related to the way in which the evangelist wrote his Gospel. His intention in writing the Gospel is clearly twofold, that his readers may believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing (they) may have life in his name" (20.30f.).

One can easily see now that there exists a parallel between the twofold functions of the law of Moses and the twofold intention of the evangelist in writing his testimony to the life-story of Jesus. Just as the scripture has life-giving power (5.39), so, too, Jesus' word has power (6.63). Just as the Jews believed that the scripture

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1. There is an extensive discussion on "doing the will of God", "doing the work(s) of God", "keeping the word(s)", and "keeping the commandments", in S. Pancaro, *Ibid.*, pp.358-451.



is the source of life (5.39), so, too, Christians believed that the word of Jesus is the source of life (5.19-29). The evangelist records how Peter confessed, saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (6.68). Just as in and through the law of Moses the word of God came to Israel, that is to say through Moses, so, too, grace and truth, the incarnate Word of God, came to the world through Jesus Christ (1.17).

Such then are some parallels of the continuity between the OT scripture or the law of Moses and the word or the words of Jesus. Hence the OT scripture and the word of Jesus are juxtaposed in John 2.22: "When therefore he (sc. Jesus) was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken." Thus both of them had same authoritative position and both of them could become the objects and contents of Christian belief.

Christians, therefore, could cite the OT scripture to bear witness to Jesus. The most conspicuous example is in John 6.45, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God'. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me." God himself is their teacher or instructor. "Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father" means everyone who has heard and learned the word of God, the OT scripture or the law of Moses, and it is he that goes to Jesus, for he is the Word become flesh (1.1, 2, 14; 8.42). Further 6.45 should be understood in the context of the discourse, sc. Jesus' unique relationship with the invisible Father (6.46) and Jesus' claim "I am the living bread which came down from heaven ..." (6.51; 33-35). In fact this verse, v.45,

explains the preceding verse, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him ..." (6.44). In the light of v.45, therefore, v.44 should not be interpreted as suggesting God's arbitrary or fatalistic predetermination, but rather as meaning that in and through one's hearing and learning of the word of God one may know the will of God.

What is the will of God? The answer is presented in 6.29 and 39f. What God wants man to do is to believe in him whom he has sent, i.e. Jesus (6.29). What the Father wants the Son to do is stated as follows: "... and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (6.39f.). Just as we have considered that v.44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him ...", should not be taken as God's arbitrary predetermination of man's coming to believe in Jesus, neither should v.39, "... that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me ...", be interpreted as God's predetermination. The three components, sc. God's giving all (men) to Jesus, Jesus' keeping them safe<sup>1</sup>, and man's believing in Jesus and in God, are inseparably fused together in such a way that they form an integrated whole.<sup>2</sup> However, our focus of attention at the moment is upon

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1. See also 17.12 and 18.9 for the same idea, that Jesus is keeping them safe.

2. v. above, chap.I,3, "The Christian gospel-event: present, living, personal, relational, happenings and the ongoing Christian mission", especially on the multiplicity of personal relationships between God, Jesus, believers and their contemporaries.

'everyone who sees the Son and believes in him', that is to say, the focus is upon the human component.

One idea that stands out in the foregoing discussion of these verses in chapter six is that the intention of God or the will of God is that man should believe in Jesus, whom God has sent into the world, and that believing man may have life in him both now in the present life and in the life to come after death. This is exactly the same as the twofold intention of the evangelist in writing the Gospel. This is also the same as the intended twofold purpose of hearing and learning from the Father, i.e. studying the word and hence the will of God in 6.45.

For, once the theological, christological and anthropological interpretation of the significance of the will of God had been established to mean that man should believe in Jesus whom God has sent, the OT scripture could be interpreted by Christians to yield one thing, that man should come to Jesus, see Jesus, hear Jesus and believe in him. Every effort was focused upon this one central concern, because what God does, sc. his giving all to Jesus (6.29), his drawing man to Jesus (6.44) and his teaching the Jews (6.45) - in whatever way one may interpret these texts - should yield one effect, that man should come, see, hear and believe in him and have life in his name. Thus Peter confessed the Christian belief in Jesus, saying "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (6.68f.).



This, then, was the mission which Jesus came to fulfill. This was the mission which God, the Father, entrusted his Son to accomplish while he was on earth. The coming of the Son from the Father, or from heaven, is for this one purpose, sc. to do the will of the Father who sent him. The complex of the thought of Jesus' mission to do the will of God was stated unambiguously in John 6.37-40, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion. One conclusion, which we may draw at this juncture, is that this compound, sc. theological, christological, anthropological and missiological understanding of the will of God is a positive Christian standpoint, by which Christians claimed that the OT scripture was fulfilled in the life, ministry and death of Jesus. They believed that their interpretation of the OT scripture was the true witnessing-believing-understanding of the will of God.

If we find that this kind of witnessing-believing-understanding of the will of God was "the established Christian conviction that the OT prophecies ... find their fulfilment in the Christ-event"<sup>1</sup>, we shall also find "a hint of how it came about that the Isaiah quotation could be applied"<sup>2</sup> to the situation of the early Church with which the Fourth evangelist was familiar, sc. the general refusal of the Jews to believe in Jesus, which reflected an analogous situation of unbelief and rejection in the time of the prophet Isaiah (John 12.37-41; Isaiah 53.1; 6.10 and 6.1). The evangelist could even quote the OT to explain the hatred of the hostile Jews and Pharisees as the fulfilment of the word that was written in the law, meaning scripture, "They hated me without a cause" (John 15.25;

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1. Barnabas Lindars, The Gospel of John, p.439.

2. Ibid., p.439.

Psalms 35.19; 69.4). Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus was also the fulfilment of scripture (John 13.18 and 17.12; Psalm 41.9).

However, there are OT quotations which positively bear witness to Jesus, his words and deeds, his crucifixion and death.<sup>1</sup> In John 1.45 Philip told Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophet wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Jesus' crucifixion was explained in terms of the analogous event found in the OT, " ... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3.14f.).

This 'prophecy and fulfilment' pattern of interpretation is very obvious in the evangelist's account of the crucifixion of Jesus. What Jesus did on the cross was interpreted by saying that Jesus<sup>2</sup> had the intention of fulfilling the scripture: "After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), 'I thirst.'" (John 19.28; Psalm 22.15). That Jesus received the vinegar was interpreted as the fulfilment of Psalm 69.21. What the soldiers did to the garments and the tunic of Jesus (John 19.23f.) was interpreted as fulfilment of the scripture, "They

1. v. above, p. 117.

2. Our primary concern here is to show how the evangelist employed OT scripture in presenting his Gospel-life of Jesus. There are many critical problems, e.g. the historicity of Jesus' intention or of the recorded event and words. There is a question of the symbolical meaning of the text and another of the tension between history and theology. These are challenging issues put to interpreters who employ redaction criticism and the method of "process hermeneutic". Our concern primarily is to see the intention of the evangelist from the text and context of the Fourth Gospel. Again, this is a methodical delimitation. However, for some attempts at critical discussion see E. D. Freed, Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John.

parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (Psalm 22.18). That Jesus' legs were not broken, because of his quick death, was also interpreted as the fulfilment of the scripture: "For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'Not a bone of him shall be broken.'" (John 19.36; Exodus 12.46; Numbers 9.12; Psalm 34.20). Further, that a soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear (John 19.34) was the fulfilment of another scripture, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." (Zechariah 12.10; cf. John 3.16).

The event in which Jesus rode a young ass into Jerusalem (John 12.14) was identified as the fulfilment of the OT scripture (Zechariah 9.9). The evangelist's explanatory comment on this event in John 12.16 has a significant relevance to our investigation into how it came about that the OT scripture could be employed to establish the Christian conviction that Jesus was the fulfilment of the OT prophecies. In John 12.16 we read, "His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him." This memory motif is found elsewhere in the Gospel. In John 2.21f. we read, "But he (sc. Jesus) spoke of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken." Yet another example, chap.20.9, reads, "... for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead."



These three parenthetical explanations of the evangelist (12.16; 2.21f.; 20.9) raise a further question and a deeper issue. Why and how was the OT scripture differently interpreted by the Jews, by Jesus and by the early Christians?

The first two texts, 12.16 and 2.21f., are related to the memory motif that leads to belief in Jesus. In 12.16 the disciples' belief in Jesus as the King of Israel had emerged out of their memory that what they and the crowd did to Jesus, being identified with the King of Israel, had been written in the OT (Psalm 118. 25f. and Zechariah 9.9.). The content of their memory was the same as the content of their belief and testimony. This principle is important.<sup>1</sup>

In John 2.21f., the question is more complex.<sup>2</sup> In this passage, 2.13-23, while only one OT text, Psalm 69.9 is quoted (v.17), there are two sayings of Jesus in v.16 and v.19. The problem is that we are neither certain whether the scripture in v.22 refers only to v.17 (Psalm 69.9) or to another OT text with which the evangelist did not supply us, nor whether the word which Jesus had spoken in v.22 refers to v.16 or v.19.

There are two factors which have to be considered in this connection. The use of the singular, 'this' and 'word', to represent what Jesus said in v.22, "... his disciples remembered that he said this ... and the word which Jesus had spoken." And the act of the experience of their memory and belief was a post-resurrection event,

1. John Knox is the champion of this "memory motif", see his books, Jesus, Lord and Christ; The Church and the Reality of Christ; and The Humanity and Divinity of Christ.

2. cf. R. E. Brown, The Gospel According to John, (i-xii), pp.115-125.

though the content of their memory was a pre-resurrection event;  
 "When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that ... and they believed ..." (v.22) - a hindsight based upon the resurrection faith.

In view of these two factors and the fact that when the Gospel was written, ca. A.D. 90, the Jerusalem temple had already been destroyed by the Romans, if the word which Jesus had spoken is one saying only, it must refer to v.19, about the destruction and the rebuilding of the temple. Then the identification or analogy drawn will be between the death and resurrection of Jesus and the destruction and rebuilding of the temple.

However, there is another possibility, that Jesus' word refers to v.16, because of the juxtaposition of the 'scripture' and the 'word' which Jesus had spoken in v.22. If we note that the content of their memory and the content of their belief are identified in the Christian confession and proclamation of the early Church, then the close link between v.16, Jesus' words "Take these things away ...", and v.17, the OT scripture, "Zeal for thy house will consume me" (Psalm 69.9), becomes intelligible. Unfortunately, the meaning of the OT text is neither immediately clear nor supplied by the evangelist. Is it too much to assume that the evangelist and the believing community to which he belonged knew the connection between what Jesus did and said on that occasion, and the OT text?

On a closer examination, we may assume that the OT text (Psalm 69.9) supplies the readers with the link between what Jesus did and said, on the one hand, and his death (and resurrection), on the other.

Here we might like to add to the foregoing sentence the words 'and resurrection', as in the bracket. But the OT text did not tell us about the restoration, sc. his resurrection. Nevertheless, the OT text prepared the way for the following conversation or controversy (vv.18-22) between the antagonistic Jews and Jesus.

We might say that the OT text prepared the way for the following theological interpretation of what Jesus did and said. This interpretation of the function of the OT text gives the impression that Jesus' saying in v.19 was the creation of, or was supplied by, the evangelist or the believing community. In view of his emphasis on the death and resurrection of Jesus, this is a reasonable conjecture. But the data and evidence of the other canonical Gospels, sc. that the cleansing of the temple is placed near to the end of Jesus' ministry, do not allow us to make such a conjecture. So we see the question of what text Jesus' word refers to, i.e. what single text, is wrongly posed. The question is rather to what texts? In other words, it does not refer to one alone, but to two texts.

As has been pointed out, Psalm 69.9, "Zeal for thy house will consume me", refers to Jesus' death in the given context of 2.13-22. But it does not refer to his resurrection. This is the point where many commentators seem forced to terminate their inquiry. The same problem faces interpreters in the exegesis of I Cor. 15.3, "... that Christ died ... in accordance with the scriptures ... that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures." Paul did not tell us what the scriptures there referred



to were. To return to 2.13-22, was the resurrection faith presupposed or was there no OT text, proper to the evangelist's purpose, to be found when he wrote the Gospel? Or can no OT text be found at all, because of the extraordinary nature of the resurrection faith?

The last text, John 20.9, presents a special problem. We read vv.8f., " ... he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead." What he (sc. the other disciple) saw was the empty tomb, the linen cloths, etc. He saw and believed, without guidance or proof from the OT scripture, but as we may assume, later they knew the scripture, that he must rise from dead. If this observation is meaningful, the question is to which OT text did the evangelist refer?

Fortunately, we can find one OT text which refers to the death and resurrection of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. It is in John 3.14, " ... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up", which is the quotation from Numbers 21.9. The same theme was used twice more, in John 8.28 and 12.34. In fact the 'lifting up' of the Son of man is one of the evangelist's distinctive theological contributions, combining both the doxological and soteriological significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus (cf. also 12.32 and 7.39).

The point is that the evangelist not only found the OT text but also employed it most effectively to expound his believing-understanding of, or his theological thought on, the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The OT text, Numbers 21.9, was not merely employed as part of the 'prophecy-fulfilment' pattern or the 'witness-to-Jesus' pattern of interpretation, but also as part of the 'Jesus-sublating-the-OT scripture' pattern of interpretation. We shall come back to discuss the last pattern of interpretation. Meanwhile, the discussion of the three parenthetical explanations, John 12.16; 2.21f.; 20.9, may be summarised.

The early Christians were in the habit of searching the OT scripture with the intention of finding relevant texts which could be used to interpret the life, ministry and death of Jesus, and to strengthen their faith. They could and they did so only because they were already Christian believers who believed in the resurrection of Jesus. Thus for the early Christians, it was first through their belief in his resurrection that they were able to understand the OT scripture as they did understand and employ it in their argument and presentation of the Christian gospel-life of Jesus, rather than vice versa. The parenthetical explanation in John 20.9 is, therefore, not unintelligible within the evangelist's presentation of the doxological and soteriological significance of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Our intention has been to clarify the transitional or transformational process of change and continuity between Jewish and Christian belief. The Jewish scripture, the OT, which was believed to embody the will of God, was now interpreted in the light of the new experience which the Christians had with Jesus. While the Christians claimed that their belief in God and Jesus guided them

to note, or gave them the clue for understanding, similarities, analogical similarities, sc. correlations and inter-penetrations, between the OT scripture and the Jesus-event, the unbelieving Jews nevertheless claimed that their belief in God and the OT could not guide nor give them a clue to seeing what the Christians were able to see and believe. Thus the antithetical or dichotomous contrast between the Jewish and the Christian way of looking at and of approaching OT scripture and the Jesus-event was sharpened by the Christian claim that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.<sup>1</sup>

It has been considered that it was not theology, but Christian messianology that divided the Jews from the Christians. The Jews believed in God but not in Jesus, yet the Christians were those who were able to believe in God and in Jesus. In other words, both the Jews and the Christians had a common understanding or presupposition in regard to their fundamental belief in God and the OT scripture; but while the Jews had just one theological standpoint, the belief in God, the Christians had both the theological and christological standpoints, belief in God and in Jesus. If the difference between them is expressed in metaphysical terms, one may say that while the Jews had only one absolute presupposition, the Christians had two.

How did the evangelist stress this twofold Christian standpoint or absolute presupposition? The evangelist presented the

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1. v. S. Pancaro, op.cit., pp.493f. The issue of the relation between Moses and Jesus, between the Law and the word of Jesus and the issue of the messiahship of Jesus are the central issues which brought forth the controversy and conflict between the Jews and the Christians.



Christian belief in God and Jesus as a compound belief. In modern jargon, the compound belief is a 'package-deal', i.e. if one accepts one, one accepts the other, too. If one believes in God, one believes in Jesus, and vice versa.<sup>1</sup>

Just as the belief in the OT and in Jesus are to the Christians a compound whole, so the belief in God and in Jesus are to them a compound whole, although the 'distinction-within-unity' relation<sup>2</sup> between God and Jesus was never lost sight of in the evangelist's belief and theology. This distinction-within-unity relation between God and Jesus is a compound whole in a manner one cannot set aside without falling into a misapprehension of the implication of the incarnation faith and the resurrection faith.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the Fourth Gospel we meet not only one but two compound beliefs:

- (a) the Christian belief in God and in Jesus,
- (b) the Christian belief in the incarnation of the divine Word in Jesus and in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.

1. Is this compound belief the clue or presupposition for understanding the belief that Jesus is the emissary from God? This is the reason why the evangelist can conclude the public ministry of Jesus in these words, "He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me ... For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me." (12.44-50). Further, according to the evangelist one of the important elements of Jesus-discipleship is to believe in God and in Jesus (14.1-11).

2. The 'distinction-within-unity' relation will be discussed further in chap.III, when a 'distinction-within-unity' frame of reference is set forth.

3. The implication of these 'faiths' will be discussed in chap.III, pp.182-195.

These two compound beliefs are the Christian particular insights and viewpoints that differentiated the Jews from the Christians in the Fourth Gospel.

In conclusion, to believe in Jesus, for the evangelist, was the same as to do the will of God (6.38-40). The evangelist could say that the scripture bore witness to Jesus as the life-giver (5.39) and that Moses wrote about Jesus (5.46). Jesus, to the Christians, now takes the place of Moses. Although the authority of Moses and of the scripture has been kept intact, it is now subordinate to the higher authority of Jesus (cf. 1.17).

Thus there was a change or shift in the attitude and standpoint from which and in the perspective and horizon within which the Christians viewed the OT scripture and the figure of Jesus. This new relationship between the scripture, Jesus, and the will of God can best be explained by the notion of 'sublation'. The term 'sublation' means (here we quote again) that "What sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carried them forward to a fuller realisation within a richer context."<sup>1</sup>

The evangelist's argument was that "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writing, how will you believe my words?" (5.46f.). This new way of seeing the correlation between Moses (his writings) and Jesus (his

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1. cf. p.90, footnote 1.

words) is extraordinary. The evangelist's standpoint was that 'Moses wrote of Jesus'. This was the Christian, but not the Jewish, standpoint. It is only from the Christian standpoint that the evangelist could say or claim that if you believe Moses, you would believe Jesus. Further, the evangelist could say and claim that since the Jews did not want to believe in Jesus (his words), ipso facto they neither believed Moses' writings (Jn 5.47) nor had God's words in them (5.38) - another extraordinary statement.

We have noted that in John 5.32-47 the 'witness-to-Jesus' pattern of interpretation was applied by the evangelist to explain the correlation between the OT scripture, Jesus, and God (the will of God and the Law of Moses). The contrast is clear enough. The Jews believed in God. They believed in the scripture, the word of God, which embodies the will of God. They further believed that by studying it and practising it they might live the life which would be pleasing to God. In fact, according to the Fourth Gospel some received Jesus and believed in him (1.12f., 41, 44, 49; 2.11, 22; 9.38; 12.11). But some could neither accept nor believe in Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Now the Christians, the believers, claimed that they could believe both in the OT scriptures as the word of God and in Jesus as witnessed to by the OT scripture. To the Jews, God and the OT scripture were constant and unalterable. What was problematic was the new intruder, the man Jesus, who was so peculiar that the Jews

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1. v. above, p. 132 for other types of Jews in between these two groups, believers and non-believers.



were unable to have a positive image or believing-understanding of him as the Messiah. They were so sure of themselves that their old, traditional image or believing-understanding of God, the OT scripture and the Messiah who was to come were not to be radically challenged. To Christians, because of their fresh insights and new viewpoints, i.e. the two compound beliefs (the belief in God and in Jesus, and the belief in the incarnation and resurrection faith), the Jewish traditional beliefs of Messianic expectation, in OT scripture and in God, and the Jewish authorities' estimation of Jesus - all these could be radically questioned, challenged and sublated. The Christians were able to have a positive image or new witnessing-believing-understanding of God, the OT and the Messiah in the light of their fresh experiences with Jesus, with the unbelieving Jews, etc. The Christian Jews' image or witnessing-believing-understanding of God, the OT and Messiah was different from that of other Jews, because in it the Jewish image or view had been sublated by the image or view of their christological witnessing-believing-understanding of Jesus. For now the Christians were able to study the OT scripture from the Christian particular standpoint and within the Christian particular perspective and horizon. They were able to believe in the God of the OT as the Father of Jesus and in Jesus as the Son of this God. In other words, the Christian Jews could see that there had emerged a fresh and distinctive perspective on the correlation between God, the OT scripture, the Messiah, Jesus, Christian Jews, other Jews and Jewish authorities.

Needless to say it was not 'God himself'<sup>1</sup> who was to be sublated by a higher norm or to be exchanged as in a change of master, nor was it the OT scripture, the book or the writing, that was to be sublated or revised. It was the objectified image, conceptualised witnessing-believing-understanding or theological picture or view of God, the OT scripture, the Messiah, Jesus, and of Jewish people, their highly institutionalised and constitutionalised religion, that was to be sublated and renewed. It was the understanding or conviction of the people who held or entertained the objectified image, conceptualised witnessing-believing-understanding or theological picture or view of God, the OT scripture, Messiah, Jesus, and of Jewish people, etc., that needed to be sublated. The point is that the old, traditional or existing, not to mention the outdated or obsolete, Jewish images of the old, traditional or existing Jewish religious and theological thought-world, had to be and had been sublated and renewed.

The insight into this fresh experience was richly rewarding, for it had provided the Christian Jews with an uncompromising spirit, to challenge and invite their fellow Jews to believe both in the God of Jesus Christ and in Jesus the Son of God. The old Jewish standpoint or viewpoint had to be shifted, their perspective challenged and horizon extended, before the Jews could see things in

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1. For 'God himself' is a postulated absolute presupposition, and the object of our worship and vision (aspiration). We may have the image, symbol, idea or spirit of this postulated being within the human thought-world, but God himself is beyond our imagination, symbolisation, idealisation or spiritualisation, etc.

a new and distinctive way. The Jewish Christians were those who were born again or born of water and of the Spirit (3.3, 5) or born of God, and had become God's children (1.12f.).

In short, because of the new basis, the new belief and the new life, the new thrust, the new inspiration and the new love-fellowship, which the early Christian Jews found in and among themselves when they came to believe in Jesus, they were able to see everything from a new and higher viewpoint in a new and distinctive way, reborn and 'new' men, distinct from those who did not or could not believe in Jesus. The early Christians had had fresh experiences which were distinct from their previous experiences when they did not know and believe in Jesus. Those fresh experiences were distinctive even from some of their previous experiences of the earlier stages of their Christian life. They saw that the crucified-risen Jesus went beyond Moses, beyond the OT scripture, and even beyond their previous images of Jesus, whom they followed, associated with, saw or heard. The Johannine Jesus had introduced something new and distinct. The Johannine Gospel-Jesus had put everything on a new basis. Yet this basis, so far from interfering with Moses, the OT scripture, Judaism, Jewish theology, the Jewish thought-world, and the early Church's gospel traditions, or destroying them, included and actually absorbed them, preserved all their proper features and properties as bearing testimony to God's will, and to Jesus who made God's will known in his life and death, and finally carried them forward to a fuller realisation within a richer context.



Such was what the early Church and the early Christians believed and claimed, when they said that Jesus was the fulfilment of OT prophecy, that the OT scriptures bore witness to Jesus, and that Jesus, to use Rahner's term, 'sublated' and renewed their previous image or view, their witnessing-believing-understanding of the OT, Judaism and Jewish theology. Moses and the OT scripture were by no means destroyed by Jesus. Far from it, Moses and the OT scripture were, all the time and everywhere, presupposed by Jesus and by the Christians of the early Church. Their authority was cherished and underwritten by Jesus to an unprecedented manner and degree. And yet they were transposed and made subordinate to the new master, Jesus, and eventually to the New Testament, the Christian writings.

Having considered in Chapter I "The Task and problems of interpretation and communication of the Fourth Gospel" and in Chapter II "The origin, formation and development of the Christian evangelical theology of the Fourth Gospel in the early Church", let us now turn to consider the ways in which a contemporary Christian interprets and communicates the Fourth Gospel.

## CHAPTER III

TOWARDS MORE COHERENT WAYS OF INTERPRETING  
AND COMMUNICATING THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL TO  
OUR CONTEMPORARIES

We have seen in the previous two chapters that in thinking and rethinking how we interpret the Fourth Gospel and communicate our understanding of it, we have to begin by constructing a present day Christian's view of the Christian gospel and religion. We are, then, led to consider how the evangelist re-interpreted the early Church's gospel traditions in the light of his own fresh experiences and those of his contemporaries of Jesus and how he constructed the Gospel-life of Jesus by subsuming the Jewish (OT) traditions. We have also traced some of the ways in which he expressed and presented his witnessing-believing-understanding of the Christian gospel and religion in concrete human existence and living encounters with the living God and the crucified-risen Jesus.

In this chapter, we shall consider two further crucial issues, sc. the ontologically structured metaphysical system and the three frames of reference, for the purpose of attempting to seek more coherent ways of interpreting and communicating the Christian gospel to our contemporaries.

1. The ontologically structured metaphysical system of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel

A pivotal question which has accompanied us all the way through in our inquiry is: How are we to obtain a more coherent theological

discourse in which the Christians' God, Jesus, human being and nature, different in degree and kind,<sup>1</sup> might be dealt with in one more unified system, if they can be unified at all?<sup>2</sup> Or how are we to communicate the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel more coherently and relevantly to our contemporaries? In fact, this pivotal question confronts us in and throughout the Gospel. At the very beginning of the Gospel we read:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God ... all things were made through him ... the Word became flesh ... No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (1.1-18).

In between the beginning and the end, we read:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life ... (Jesus) having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." (3.16; 13.1).

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1. For the problem of difference in degree and kind, see R. G. Collingwood, An Essay on Philosophical Method, chap.III, "The Scale of Forms", pp.54-91.

2. v. E. Käsemann, "The Problem of a New Testament Theology", in NTS, 19, 1972-1973, pp.235-245. Käsemann there suggests the need for "meaningful structure" in the task of a New Testament theology. It is a major problem that is faced by the interpreter who diligently takes the Gospel as a whole, sc. the problem of unity, which seems to many to arise inevitably from the very nature of the Gospel. It appears in the history of interpretation in three forms: literary unity, unity in the theological thought of the evangelist and unity of subject-matter, i.e. the Christian Gospel. The two latter have been our concern and attention has been directed to these. Besides we are also interested in the unity of Christian living and acting, sc. of Christians' experiences.



And at the end, we read:

"... these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." (20.31).

Of the elusiveness of the theological thought of the evangelist, J. L. Price<sup>1</sup> has this to say:

"Why has the theology of John been so strangely resistant to systematic analysis and explication? Does the answer lie in the mind of the Fourth Evangelist, in his style of thought and expression? Was he a man given to spiraling, vagrant flights of mystical speculation that escape rational synthesis? Or did the syncretistic influences of his age and place introduce into his thought that logical inconsistency and contradiction which some have found in his writing? Is the way to our understanding of John's theology blocked by a too-limited knowledge of his intellectual world and that of his first readers? Alternatively, does the solution to the problem lie - nearly hidden - in the obscure literary history of the Gospel of John? Is this canonical writing only an exiguous survival of the Evangelist's theology? Must we conclude that the Gospel is a patchwork thing, published posthumously from notes left by its original author somewhat in disarray, and that later editing distorted or obscured the Evangelist's thought?"

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1. "The Search for the Theology of the Fourth Evangelist", in New Testament Issues, ed. by R. Batey, p.227.

These questions surely sum up the complexity of the Johannine questions, problems and scholarship.<sup>1</sup> However, we wish to take up one fundamental issue, the issue of the dualistic perspective, (divine-human, spirit-flesh, above-below, life-death, light-darkness, etc.) which is so typical and central to the Johannine type of theological thought. The issue directly involves the four, or two compound, intricately correlated fundamental Christian beliefs, sc. the belief in God and in Jesus, the incarnation and resurrection. The issue, therefore, directly involves God, Jesus and human being. A further attempt to explore and discuss the issue in question may furnish us with further insights and inverse insights<sup>2</sup> into the confessional statement of those Christian beliefs, so full of tensions and riddles to the modern mind.

Does not this, however, involve our entering that complex labyrinth known as the 'Christian paradox'? The problem of the paradoxical character of the theology of the Fourth Gospel is an intricate one. It appears in various forms. Fundamentally, it appears as the inseparable conjunction (to use somewhat Chalcedonian

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1. On the problems of the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, see E. F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology, pp.1-28 (though somewhat outdated, the problems raised are still very relevant and challenging); W. F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, "Criticism of the Fourth Gospel 1931-1954" and "The Problems of Interpretation", pp.164-267; E. C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, "The Problem of the Fourth Gospel", pp.17-20, "The Historical Tension of the Fourth Gospel", pp.58-85, "The Fourth Gospel and the Problem of the Meaning of History", pp.107-128, and "The Theological Tension of the Fourth Gospel", pp.129-135; and M. L. Appold, The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel, "Introduction to the Problem", pp.1-10. Appold, commenting on Käsemann's new attempt in The Testament of Jesus, says, "Käsemann's recent study ... introduced decidedly new impulses into the Johannine discussion ..." (p.6).

2. v. above, p.80, footnote 1.

terminology) of the two natures, divine and human of the Christian Jesus, especially the Christian belief in the incarnation and resurrection faith.<sup>1</sup> Another emerges from the inseparable conjunction of Christian history and theology.<sup>2</sup> Yet another appears in the inseparable conjunction of Christian history and eschatology;<sup>3</sup> and yet another as the paradox of the continuity and discontinuity between death and resurrection.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it appears in the "paradox of distinction-within-unity"<sup>5</sup> between Jesus, the Son of God, and God, the Father.

Our main concern here is not to place on view the insoluble compound of the two natures or the paradoxical unity, etc. We shall approach the issue from the twofold perspective of "the distinction-within-unity correlation" between the event and person of Jesus<sup>6</sup> and "the distinction-within-unity correlation" between

1. v. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Eng.tr., vol.2, Part III, "The Theology of the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles"; E. Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus, Eng.tr.; T. E. Pollard, Johannine Christology and the Early Church, Part I, chap.1, pp.1-15; J. Knox, The Humanity and Divinity of Christ; S. J. Sykes and S. S. Smalley (eds.), Christ and Spirit in the New Testament. Books such as these basically deal with the issue in question.

2. v. E. C. Hoskyns, op.cit., "The Fourth Gospel and the problem of History", pp.107-128.

3. v. R. Bultmann, History and Eschatology.

4. v. E. Käsemann, op.cit., p.5, "Why did he (the evangelist) choose to clothe his thought in the form of a testament?" And p.4, "For this form of presentation is essentially paradoxical."

5. v. T. E. Pollard, op.cit., p.15.

6. Traditionally 'the person and work of Jesus' is the phrase used in christological discussion. In the present thesis, because of its emphasis upon 'relational happening', the phrase, 'the event and person of Jesus' is used to embrace Jesus' words, deeds and person. See our discussion on 'Jesus-event', pp.169-176, 245-250, below.



God, Jesus and mankind in the world. In order to expound the complexity of the issue, I have borrowed Lonergan's system of thought, an "ontologically structured metaphysics"<sup>1</sup> and many other insights and inverse insights which are found in his books, Insight and Method in Theology.<sup>2</sup> I also have borrowed Collingwood's Principles of history and his concept of "absolute presuppositions" and many other insights and inverse insights in his books, An Autobiography, The Idea of History,

1. B. Lonergan says, "... in ontologically structured metaphysics the ultimate causa essendi, in terms of which all else is explained, is God ..." (Insight, p.734). We are fully aware of the limitation of the construction of an unified system of a Christian theological discourse which is based upon Christians' affirmation of the existence of the living God and Jesus and their relation with human beings. However, see the "positive function of a critical metaphysics" in Method in Theology, pp.340-344. See also "The Method of Metaphysics" in Insight, chap.XIV, pp.385-430. cf. also D. M. Emmet, The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking, chaps.VII, "Theology, Philosophy and History", VIII, "Analogia Entis", and IX, "Metaphysical Analogies", pp.146-214.

2. Lonergan's understanding of the function of theology is as follows: "Theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix." Having said this in the first sentence of the "Introduction" to Method in Theology, he goes on to say, "The classicist notion of culture was normative ... Besides the classicist, there also is the empirical notion of culture ... Method is not a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dolt. It is a framework for collaborative creativity. It would outline the various clusters of operations to be performed by theologians when they go about their various tasks. A contemporary method would conceive those tasks in the context of modern science, modern scholarship, modern philosophy, of historicity, collective practicality and coresponsibility ...." (p.xi). Since the task of the interpretation and communication of the Fourth Gospel aims at human understanding, Lonergan's contribution to "human understanding in one's appropriation of one's interiority, one's subjectivity" has been attended to, appropriated and collaborated with extensively in the composition of the present thesis. What and where we have directly borrowed from him are stated ad loc. cf. D. Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan; W. E. Conn, Essay review on Tracy, Ibid., in USQR, vol.27-28, 1971-73, pp.31-35; and P. Corcoran (ed.), Looking at Lonergan's Method.

An Essay on Metaphysics and An Essay on Philosophical Method.<sup>1</sup>

We, however, have to supply a christological component<sup>2</sup> in order to consider the question. How do we know and discuss the incarnate-crucified-risen Jesus of the Fourth Gospel?<sup>3</sup>

To the evangelist, Christian witnessing, believing, knowing and living are inseparably inter-related and interlocking. This is why the compound word, "witnessing-believing-understanding" is employed in the present theological discourse. While the purpose of the Gospel (John 20.30f.) is to yield as well as to reinforce both Christian believing and living, Christian knowing mediates between the two. In the sequential unfolding of his Gospel-life of Jesus as the revelation of God<sup>4</sup>, knowing is so important that the

1. Collingwood's philosophy of history is appropriated by us in two ways: first, his principles of history guide us in our historical thinking, imagination and argument about the historical past, Christian gospel traditions and the vexing question of the historical Jesus, and further about the relation between human activities and historical events; secondly, his theory of "absolute presuppositions" gives us the opportunity of being able to discuss Christian fundamental beliefs and provides us with "closed options" (v. B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, pp.340-344) for the systematisation of a universe of discourse for an evangelical theology. This in turn provides us with a line of demarcation, which can both confine us within as well as take us beyond a horizon, so that we are able to have both an ordinary and a critical way of studying the theological thought of the evangelist. What and where we have directly borrowed from him are again stated ad loc. cf. D. M. Mackinnon's review of The Idea of History, in JTS, vol.48, 1947; and M. Krausz (ed.), Critical Essays on the Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood.

2. On christological thinking, reasoning and imagination, see J. McIntyre, The Shape of Christology, pp.58, 124, 172-174; R. H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology; E. Schweizer, Jesus; N. Pittenger, Christology Reconsidered; C. F. D. Moule, The Origin of Christology; B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (eds.), Christ and Spirit in the New Testament. It goes without saying that the Fourth Gospel is a super bonum source book of christology.

3. See Appendix II, "How to talk of God and of the incarnate-crucified-risen Jesus?", pp.236-238, and Appendix III, "The incarnation-resurrection faith and the Fourth Gospel", pp.239-250.

4. The notion of revelation or revealed knowledge is closely associated with ethical and religious practices and is expounded within the context or situation of living personal and inter-personal relational happening. Further it is connected with the notion of the disclosure or exposure of the contact and conflict between God, Jesus and people in the evangelist's contemporary world whereby the judgement for or against - glorification, salvation or condemnation - takes place.



evangelist has Jesus say, "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen ..." (3.11), and " ... this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (17.3). While, negatively, those who do evil are those who have not known the Father nor the Son: "They will put you out of the synagogue; ... they will do this because they have not known the Father and me." (16.2f.).

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the subject-matter of Christian theology (wider sense) subsumes three theological disciplines, sc. Christian theology, (narrower sense), messianology and anthropology. These three constituent layers of Christian evangelical theology can be postulated in an hierarchical order within the confines of the ontologically structured metaphysical system of Christian theological discourse as follows:

- (a) Christian theology (narrower sense) is a necessary super-stratum of Christian theology (wider sense).
- (b) Christian messianology (christology) is a necessary mid-stratum that mediates between Christian theology (narrower sense) and anthropology.
- (c) Anthropology is a necessary sub-stratum of Christian theology (wider sense).

This then is the metaphysical system implied in the theological thought of the Fourth evangelist which the present writer ventures to call or describe as a philosophy of Christian theology or of the



Christian gospel; in other words, a philosophy of Christian evangelical theology. However, what is meant by the Christian gospel in the present thesis has to be determined more precisely.

(1) A further working definition of the Christian gospel

The word 'gospel' means good news or information about an event or events which have taken place already at a particular time and place and which are good for man. The notion of good,<sup>1</sup> however, has a very wide range and many delicate shades of meaning depending on the context within which the word 'good' is employed. In the context of Christian evangelical theology, good means that which exalts, honours or glorifies human beings, the Christian Jesus and the Christian God in the perspective and horizon of Christian soteriology. This means that our definition of 'good' is conditioned, determined or qualified by a certain concept of man (Christian anthropology), Jesus (Christian messianology) and God (Christian theology), and of glory and salvation.

However, the Christian gospel, in the technical sense, means the good news about what Jesus said and did, about his birth, life, work and death - in short, about the man Jesus, his history and work.<sup>2</sup>

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1. There is an extensive discussion on the human good in B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, pp.27-55. His introductory remarks on the discussion read, "What is good, always is concrete. But definitions are abstract. Hence, if one attempts to define the good, one runs the risk of misleading one's readers ..." In our exposition of what is the Christian gospel, we run the same risk.

2. v. R. H. Strachan, "The Gospel in the New Testament", in I.B., vol.VII, pp.3-31.

But in what sense has the information about this man Jesus and about what he said and did twenty centuries ago in Palestine, been perceived, believed, and further witnessed to, told and retold, as the 'good news' from God to mankind by Jesus' contemporaries and by successive Christian generations irrespective of race and colour?

Let us employ the term 'Jesus-event' as a point of departure to describe Jesus' experience. By Jesus' experience we mean his present, living, personal and interpersonal relational happening in the world with God and his contemporaries, etc. From the evangelist's standpoint, we may be able to see that what Jesus experienced was known and interpreted by Christian believers as what happened to Jesus and its effects on God, Jesus himself, and on mankind.

The Jesus-event, by our definition, then, is an ordinary human event. It is the ordinary experience of a Jew. Nevertheless, the Jesus-event of the early Church's gospel traditions is, in some sense and in some degree, an already interpreted event and is projected within the perspective of the Christian gospel.<sup>1</sup>

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1. No one can refute the observation that the Jesus-event reported by or known to anyone, whether he be Christian or not, ancient or modern, is an already interpreted event. For there can be no report or knowledge or a pure event simpliciter as uninterpreted event. An event reported or known is of necessity and always an event interpreted and understood from certain standpoints and projected within certain perspectives for certain purposes. cf. B. J. F. Lonergan, Insight, p.83: "... Inversely, whenever one asserts verification or existence or occurrence, one may be asked what is verified, what exists, what occurs. Thus, questions for intelligence and questions for reflection are universally concomitant and complementary. There is a parallel concomitance and complementarity between conjugates and events. Without events, conjugates can be neither discovered nor verified. Without conjugates, events can be neither distinguished nor related. Such, I submit, is the elementary scheme in which insight can grasp what is meant by the otherwise puzzling name, event."

But why was the Jesus-event interpreted as Christian gospel-event? Let us compare the Jesus-event with an ordinary human event. They are similar in that they are both human happenings, and in that they are both interpreted and known by man. Nevertheless, even on the human level of interpretation and understanding, the Jesus-event as human event can be differently interpreted and known. The key word here is 'interpretation'.<sup>1</sup> For the dissimilarity between them emerges out of different interpretations.

That which contributes to differentiating Christian interpretations from non-Christian interpretations are the particular Christian standpoints, perspectives and horizons, purposes and aspirations which are grounded upon the Christian absolute presuppositions, sc. the four correlated fundamental Christian beliefs. However, a Christian interpreter also employs the common and particular standpoints, perspectives, etc. which are grounded upon the absolute presuppositions which scientists employ in various fields of their contemporary cultural investigation and research, in so far as non-Christian scientists' interpretations are not contradictory to Christian scientists' interpretations.

What are the particular Christian standpoints, perspectives, etc.? They are the Christian theological, christological and anthropological interpretations. This pattern can be called the three layers of the Christian scheme for interpreting human affairs (v. p. 168, above). This pattern of operation is in common practice

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1. On "interpretation", cf. J. Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, p. 13; and B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, pp. 153-173.



in all Christian preaching and teaching of, and bearing witness to the Christian gospel. At this point, one can only state that the answer to the question, what are the particular Christian interpretations of the Jesus-event as the gospel-event, depends on our answers to the following questions: who does a Christian individual and a Christian community say is the Christian God, the Christian Messiah Jesus and the man Jesus of Nazareth?

Since we are concerned with the interpretation of the Jesus-event, our starting point is the question, who this man Jesus of Nazareth was. In other words, we begin with general anthropology and then proceed to particular anthropology. On the commonsense level, i.e. in terms of general anthropology, both the Christian and the non-Christian answer to the question, who Jesus of Nazareth was, would be very much alike, so. he was a Jew.<sup>1</sup>

But even on the human level, if the same question were answered in terms of a philosophy of life<sup>2</sup> we would receive different answers from philosophers who hold different standpoints, perspectives, etc. According to one's particular set of truth and value judgements, one might maintain ethical and religious views, depending on the

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1. How much do we know about Jesus of Nazareth? An answer to this question is that what we know of him is primarily through the witness of the New Testament and the Church's traditions. However, our understanding or believing-understanding of the New Testament and the Church's traditions is through our commonsense understanding of human historical, philosophical and theological experience, imagination, thinking and reasoning. cf. R. Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, p.58; R. A. Culpepper, The Johannine School, and his "The origin of the school of Jesus", pp.220-232.

2. For the definition of 'philosophy of life', see above, p.36, footnote 1.

varied orientations to different concepts and objects of ultimate concern.<sup>1</sup>

At the moment, we are primarily concerned with the different interpretations of the Jesus-event according to diverse doctrines of man. The Jesus-event, if interpreted from the standpoint of Jews, would become the history of a Jew, but if interpreted from the standpoint of Christians, it would become perhaps more than the history of a Jew; rather the history of a reformer of Judaism and the founder of Christianity as well as the man who is the supreme 'model' or 'example' of what a human being or an authentic human being ought to be, and to become, how he or she ought to live and why - in short, the 'norm' of the Christian doctrine of man and woman.

At this point we have enlarged the horizon of the thought-world of the Christian interpretation of the Jesus-event by introducing the element of Christian messianology and theology (narrower sense) into the field of Christian anthropology. It is noteworthy that the Christian interpretation of the Jesus-event subsumes not only the three theological disciplines, sc. anthropology, messianology and theology, but also subsumes the two basic views of the philosophy of life, sc. the ethical and religious views. On this showing, the Christian scheme for interpreting human affairs is comprehensive in encompassing all other patterns of interpretation. Nevertheless, our question as to the particular Christian standpoints, perspectives, etc. remains unanswered.

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1. Jesus could be a good man, a miracle worker, a man from God, a Jewish rabbi, a reformer of Jewish religion or a man from heaven, etc.

Let us consider how <sup>the</sup> Fourth evangelist interpreted the Jesus-event. According to the Fourth Gospel, it was during his public ministry that Jesus made contact with his fellow Jews and also with some gentiles. However, it was in Jesus' ethical and religious teachings and activities, in his testifying to his believing-understanding of the God-and-man and man-and-man relations that he exhibited views different from the Jewish authorities and the conflict between them emerged.

That the evangelist explained the Jesus-event in the perspective of the birth, life, work and death of the Christian Messiah and the Son of God is the matter that demands our special attention. Further the Messiah's birth, life, etc. were explained in the perspective and horizon of Christian soteriology and doxology.

Thus, what decisively differentiates the Christian doctrine of man from the non-Christian doctrine of man, or indeed from the Jewish doctrine of man, is not the interpretations in terms of anthropological variants on the physical level, but the interpretations in terms of the philosophy of life on the intellectual and rational levels, and further on the ethical and religious levels.

However, the basic issue takes us yet a step further. For what decisively differentiates the Christian philosophy of life from both non-religious and other religious philosophies of life is the Christian messianology and theology. And these same factors are also what decisively differentiates the Christian ethic and religion from non-religious and other religious ethical systems and all other religions or indeed from Jewish ethical and religious practices.



For in the last analysis, the Christian doctrine of man derives its forms and contents from the Christian witnessing-believing-understanding or the Christian interpretation of the Christian Messiah and the Christian God.

At this juncture, we are able to see how the evangelist interpreted the Jesus-event, i.e. a man-event, both as 'God-event' and as 'Christ-event' (Messiah-event). By God-event is meant that the Jesus-event was interpreted as what the Christian God said and did. By Christ-event is meant that the Jesus-event was interpreted as what the Christian Messiah, Christ, the God-anointed one, said and did.

The God-event, therefore, is the Jesus-event theologically (narrower sense) interpreted or explained within the horizon and in the perspective of God's saving love and purpose towards the whole of mankind. If Christian theology (narrower sense) is human thinking and talking about the Christian God, then the God-event will be human thinking and talking about what God said and did from the standpoint (of the Christian witnessing-believing-understanding) of God. Is this human thinking or human talk of God really possible? Our concern now is not with the possibility but with the practicability of such talk. For in fact, this is what the OT prophets did when they spoke on behalf of, or in the name of God. For unless they could assume the standpoint or viewpoint of God, how could they speak for God or declare the word of God? When Jesus taught his contemporaries about God, did he not do the same as the OT prophets did? The same is true both for the Fourth evangelist and for our contemporary preachers.

The Christ-event then is the Jesus-event christologically interpreted or explained within the horizon and in the perspective of the Christian Messianology. If our christology (Christian messianology) is human thinking and talking about the Christian Messiah, then the Christ-event will be human thinking and talking about what the Christian Messiah said and did from the standpoint of (the Christian witnessing-believing-understanding of) the Christian Messiah.

Mutatis mutandis, we may be able to see that Jesus' person and life, i.e. the person and life of a man, can be interpreted as 'Christ's person and life' and as 'God's person and life'. By 'Christ's person and life' is meant that Jesus' person and life was interpreted as what the Christian Messiah, Christ, the God-anointed one, was and lived. By 'God's person and life' is meant that Jesus' person and life was interpreted as what the Christian God was and did.

In summary, in Christianity and in the technical sense, the Christian gospel means the good news about Jesus, his life and work. The Jesus-event subsumes the man-event, the Christ-event and the God-event in the perspective of Christian doxology and soteriology. Jesus' person and life, therefore, subsumes the man's person and life, Christ's person and life and God's person and life.

(2) The ascending-descending interpretative scheme of  
the Christian Gospel

In the process of determining a further working definition of the Christian gospel, we have seen that a Christian interpretative scheme has emerged. This scheme has three layers of theological disciplines, sc. anthropology, messianology and theology. It is a pattern ascending from the Jesus-event as human event to the one as the Christ-event and God-event. It may be said that 'natural theology', or 'theology of the lifting-up', sc. 'resurrection theology', belongs to this ascending interpretative scheme. This ascending process moves upwards from earth to heaven or from man to God. It is an ascending interpretative process from physical, human or earthly affairs to spiritual, divine or heavenly affairs.

Thus this ascending pattern pertains to the believing-understanding of the Jesus-event in terms of

- (a) the general and particular anthropology of a non-religious type, such as commonsense, racial, national, scientific or ethical anthropology, and that of the general and particular religious type, such as that common to all religions and particular to the Judaeo-Christian religion;
- (b) the general and particular messianology, i.e. the believing-understanding of saviour and of the doctrine of salvation, of a non-religious type and that of the general and particular religious type; and



- (c) the theology (narrower sense) common to all religions and particular to the Judaeo-Christian religion.

On the other hand, the same interpretative scheme, if viewed from the believer's standpoint and starting from the Christian belief in God and in Jesus, will become a descending interpretative scheme. It may be said that 'revelation theology' or 'incarnation theology' belongs to this scheme. This descending process moves downwards from heaven to earth or from God to man. It is a descending interpretative process from spiritual, divine or heavenly affairs to physical, human or earthly affairs.

This descending pattern, therefore, pertains to the believing-understanding of the Jesus-event in terms of

- (a) the particular Christian theology (narrower sense) which subsumes all other types of theology, inasmuch as they do not negate or contradict it;
- (b) the particular Christian messianology which subsumes all other types of messianology and soteriology, inasmuch as they do not negate or contradict it; and
- (c) the particular Christian anthropology which subsumes all other types of anthropology, inasmuch as they do not negate or contradict it.

This ascending-descending Christian gospel interpretative scheme does not necessarily operate in a one-way process or rigidly in that prescribed order of ascent or descent. The foregoing pattern of the three layers of Christian interpretation of human or divine affairs is a comprehensive and schematic one. It does not follow that every interpretation of human or divine affairs would take place always and everywhere in such a comprehensive and compound manner. It may for a variety of reasons be selective in its operation.

However, the Christian gospel-stories about Jesus and about believers generally contain the combination of these two, ascending and descending, interpretative schemes. That is to say that the Christian gospel-story is a compound both of 'natural and revelation' theology and of 'resurrection and incarnation' theology. If one starts from human affairs, one has to search out, identify and appeal to divine revelation or the fundamental Christian beliefs in order to describe or explain the human affairs as God-events or Christ-events. For the anthropological component needs both the theological and the christological component in order that the Christian gospel-event may be formulated. If one begins with the fundamental Christian belief in God and divine affairs, i.e. God's activities, one has to search out, identify and appeal to Christian and non-Christian anthropology and natural and human events in order to describe or explain the fundamental Christian belief in God and divine affairs as God-events and Christ-events in history, or to describe or explain the relevance of the fundamental Christian belief in God and divine affairs to human beings and to human and

natural events. For the theological component needs both the christological and the anthropological component in order that the Christian gospel-event may be formulated.

Whether a Christian employs the ascending or descending scheme of interpretation, what mediates and relates the human and divine affairs or the anthropological and theological component is Jesus Christ, his person and the christological component. For the Christian Messiah is both divine and human. It is because of this dualistic character or distinction-within-unity relation, which is based upon the incarnation and resurrection faith, that Christian messianology can be called the necessary mid-stratum that mediates between Christian theology (narrower sense) and Christian anthropology.

The ascending pattern, if employed in the interpretation of the resurrection of the crucified Jesus, is at once simple and complex. It is simple, because the resurrection faith is absolutely presupposed, accepted, believed, and in these senses experienced religiously, and is not to be questioned philosophically and/or investigated historically.<sup>1</sup> However, theologians and Christians know, all too well, that the implication of this fundamental Christian belief in the construction of Christian theology (wider sense) and the implementation of it in the actual practice of Christian living and acting can be very complex indeed.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The thesis does not share this view. On the questionability of the fundamental Christian beliefs understood and employed as the absolute presuppositions of theological discourse, see above pp.71-81.

2. The complexity of the theological thought and the problem of the intricate relation between Christian belief and Christian living in the NT writings bear testimony to this observation.



The descending pattern, if employed in the interpretation of the incarnation of the divine Word, the coming or the birth of Jesus who dwelt among men until his death, also is at once simple and complex. It is simple, because the incarnation faith is absolutely presupposed, accepted and believed, and in these senses experienced religiously, and no further questions whatever may be presented. However, the implication of this faith in the construction of Christian theology,<sup>1</sup> and its implementation and embodiment in actual living are very difficult and complex indeed.

The simplicity and the complexity of the theology of the Christian gospel in general, and the Fourth Gospel in particular, lie in the believing-understanding or interpretation of the Jesus-event grounded upon the correlated two compound beliefs, sc. the belief in God and in Jesus and the belief in the incarnation and in the resurrection. Just as the Johannine Gospel-life of Jesus begins with the pre-existence and the incarnation, which involves belief in God and in Jesus, and ends with the death-resurrection and the post-existence which involves belief in God and in Jesus, so too, the whole Gospel-life or the Gospel-history of Jesus is presented within the faith-horizon or faith-range of these two compound beliefs.

Thus, these two compound beliefs are like two pairs of shuttles moving to and fro, forwards and backwards, inter-weaving human and divine affairs in the formation of the Christian gospel-stories: the

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1. See John McIntyre, The Shape of Christology. The book is "a radical reassessment of the basic shape of the central doctrine of the Christian faith", p.11. It is at once a methodical, critical and comprehensive study of "the basic structure of christology".

stories of the work of God, the life of Jesus, the life of believers who bore witness, and of the life of those, e.g. the Jews and others in the Fourth Gospel, who are in contact and in conflict with God, Jesus and believers.

(3) The incarnation-resurrection faith and the overall Gospel image of the Johannine Jesus

We shall now consider the implication of the incarnation and resurrection faith in the evangelist's presentation of the Gospel-life of Jesus.

The incarnation implies the Christian belief that the divine Word was embodied in Jesus and that this Jesus is the Son of God (the divine figure) who was sent by and from God, or who came down from heaven. By this belief, or in this believing-understanding, the evangelist explained and communicated both Jesus' divine origin and identity, and, further, the purpose and destiny of his coming or being sent, sc. to glorify God and to save the whole of mankind. Thus, in accord with the three constituent layers of the discourse of the Christian gospel, three expositions of the incarnation faith can be given.

(a) Anthropologically, the incarnation faith stresses Jesus' human origin, his coming into existence, sc. his birth, life and death. The Word became flesh and dwelt among men. (John 1.14). He is the son of Joseph (1.45; 6.42). He is a teacher come from God (3.2) and a prophet (4.19; 7.40). But, he is just a human figure like an ordinary Jewish believer. The human Jesus then is the one

with whom the Jews and those, who are contemporary with Jesus, are in contact and in conflict. These human experiences and believing-understandings, sc. their knowledge of the man Jesus on the human level, are the data of the anthropological component of the Christian gospel-life of Jesus.

(b) Messianologically, the incarnation faith involves both the human and the divine origin of Jesus. It identifies the man Jesus with the pre-existent Word of God (1.1-3 and 14). He is a human figure but confessed also to being a divine figure who came from God (1.14, 18). This Jesus is the one with whom the Jews, who are contemporary with Jesus, are in contact and in conflict. These human experiences and believing-understandings, sc. their knowledge of the man Jesus who confessed himself, according to the narrative of the evangelist, and in this sense who was conscious of himself, as being the Messiah and the Son of God both on the human and on the divine levels, are the data of the messianological component of the Christian gospel-life of Jesus.

(c) Theologically (narrower sense), the incarnation faith implies the ground of the divine and human origin of Jesus as Christians believe it to be. It is God the Father who sent the Son into, or gave the Son to the world (3.16f., 34). Thus God is known and believed as 'him, who sent Jesus' and Jesus as 'him, whom God has sent'. Without God the Father, the divine ground and authority, the Son cannot do anything (5.19, 30). Nicodemus says to Jesus, "... no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." (3.2). The divine Father, God, is the one with whom the Jews, who are contemporary with Jesus, are in contact and in conflict.



These human experiences and believing-understandings, sc. their knowledge of God, the Father of Jesus, on the divine level, are the data of the theological component of the Christian gospel-life of Jesus.

Now, the resurrection faith is the Christian belief that the crucified Jesus was raised by God from the dead and was vindicated and exalted to be the Lord and Saviour. In this belief, the evangelist explained both the human and divine destiny of Jesus, sc. his death, his departure from the world and his going back to the Father. He also explained the promise of his return to his disciples and the future coming and ministry of the Paraclete. Just as with the belief in the incarnation, so too, three expositions of the resurrection faith can be given.

(a) Anthropologically, the resurrection faith bears witness to the facts of the death of the man Jesus, that he was crucified, that he died and that he was buried. But it also bears witness to the fact that the Christians of the early Church believed that Jesus was raised from the dead.

(b) Messianologically, the resurrection faith involves both the death and the resurrection which took place in the same person Jesus who was a man, but is now known and confessed as the Messiah, the Son of God. This belief identifies the crucified Jesus with the risen Jesus, and vice versa, and with the post-existent Jesus. This Jesus is the resurrection and the life (11.25). He has been given authority to give life to believers and to raise the dead to new life (5.21-29).

(c) Theologically, the resurrection faith implies the belief in God who is the ground of the Christian witnessing-believing-understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is God who raised the crucified Jesus and exalted him (5.21, 26f.) to be the Lord (20.28, 2, 13, 18, 25; 4.1; 6.22; 11.2) and the Christ (11.27; 1.17; 17.3; etc.).

Thus the incarnation faith and the resurrection faith both involve the three theological components. The fact of the early Christians' belief in the incarnation of the divine Word in Jesus and the resurrection of the crucified Jesus is the compound faith-event which had taken place in God, Jesus and his disciples at the beginning and the end of the Johannine Gospel-life of Jesus.

Structurally, the evangelist presented his Gospel-life of Jesus from the pre-existent Word which was with God, to his incarnation in Jesus, Jesus' earthly ministry and resurrection, and finally the return of the risen and exalted Jesus to his disciples, sc. the risen and post-existent Jesus with God and his disciples.

It is true that historically speaking and from the perspective of Jesus' earthly life-span in the linear concept of time and history, his birth, hence his own incarnation-event (i.e. Christologically speaking, Jesus himself was the incarnation of the pre-existent Word of God) comes first, and then, at the end of his life-span, his own resurrection-event (i.e. the crucified Jesus was raised from the dead). However, from the perspective of the ascending-descending theological (wider sense) interpretative scheme,

the Christian experience of the faith-event of the resurrection of the crucified Jesus comes first, then comes the Christian hindsight into the incarnated-historical-crucified-risen Jesus. This hindsight emerges out of their reflection on their memory of their experiences with the historical-crucified Jesus and on their fresh experiences with the historical, crucified-risen Jesus within the fellowship of the Christian community. The resurrection faith, therefore, is the ground which gives birth to the incarnation faith rather than vice versa.

It is true, however, that the resurrection faith-event is the climax of all the canonical Gospels' life of Jesus. It is also true that the believing-understanding of the incarnation faith-event and that of the resurrection faith-event form one compound unity, distinguishable yet indissoluble. They are combined or fused in such a way that the Gospel-life of Jesus would be and could be better and more coherently understood, believed and accepted, hence communicated, on the ground of these two concomitant and complementary beliefs. A further structural analysis will show that these two fundamental Christian beliefs are combined or fused and are carefully woven into the whole Gospel of John.<sup>1</sup>

Readers generally receive the impression that the Johannine Jesus knows everything, even the heart and mind of people. He is in command of all situations and the appropriate timing of all events, private or public, human or divine. However, our concern here is with the evangelist's knowledge of Jesus rather than with

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1. See Appendix III, The incarnation-resurrection faith and the Fourth Gospel, pp. 239-250.



the ability of Jesus. If the evangelist interpreted the Jesus-event as the Christ-event and as God-event, then the evangelist could be said to know or assume the mind and thought of the man Jesus, of the Christ Jesus, and of God. The evangelist must have assumed the viewpoint of the man Jesus, of the Christ Jesus, and of God. He must have spoken and written on behalf of the man Jesus, and on behalf of God.<sup>1</sup> Is this the prophetic role and function of a Christian evangelist, a Christian preacher or a Christian interpreter,<sup>2</sup> who speaks or writes for and bears witness<sup>3</sup> to Jesus the man, the Christ and also to God?<sup>4</sup>

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1. We may also reasonably assume that the evangelist assumed the viewpoint of the Jews who were contemporary with the historical Jesus and thus spoke and wrote on their behalf.

2. v. J. L. Martyn, History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel, and his chap. 7 ... "To the Presence of the Son of Man", pp. 120-142, for the discussion of the 'two-level drama' and the identification of Jesus, the Other Paraclete and the Christian Witness in function and outlook; S. S. Smalley, John: Evangelist and Interpreter, chaps. V and VI.

3. v. A. A. Trites, The New Testament Concept of Witness; and G. Johnston, The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John.

4. It follows that while we have affirmed the evangelist's assumed knowledge of the mind and thought of Jesus and of God, we have to acknowledge, at once and in the same vein, that his assumed or believed knowledge is a partial rather than a complete or perfect one, because of the particular and concrete situation within which he found himself. Further this knowledge is always and persistently a witnessing-believing-understanding. If the truth of the reality of this prophetic role and function were doubted and/or negated, not only the validity of Christian theological imagination, thinking, reasoning and reflection in the human theological enterprise would have to be questioned but all human theological discourse would also have been made nonsensical. cf. our discussion of the Jesus-event as man-event, Christ-event and God-event, pp. 169-176, above. cf. also Isaiah 55.8f., "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

To believers the persistent presentation of the hour of glorification of the Son of God, or the 'lifting up' of the Son of man as the culmination of the whole life and ministry of Jesus sounds splendid and victorious. The Christian God and the Christian Messiah Jesus have overcome death, darkness and the world. However, it may sound too mechanistic and deterministic to non-believers; and indeed it is often so presented by simple believers and simple expositors. Nevertheless, the evangelist is, with a relatively differentiated consciousness, expounding a complex phenomenon. For, when he was composing the Gospel he had to cope with so many standpoints and viewpoints, various perspectives and horizons, consciously or unconsciously, such as the standpoints and viewpoints of the ever-living God, of the pre-existent-incarnate-risen-post-existent Jesus and of the various living groups and generations of men in various living situations in history and the world. The reality of this complex fact should not escape the eyes and minds of interpreters and communicators of the Fourth Gospel, which is a highly composite work of literary art, symbolical significance and theological (wider sense) insights and inverse insights.<sup>1</sup>

The man Jesus had died some 60 years before the evangelist's Gospel-life of Jesus finally took its extant shape. The Jesus-event or Jesus-life is in this sense history. Jesus, the man and his history, was already 'out there', then and real. However, this crucified Jesus was raised and was contemporaneous with those who

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1. Both insights and inverse insights are operating in the evangelist's mind in his presentation of the discourse between Jesus and the Jews, e.g. concerning 'freedom' and the belief in 'One Father God' (8.12-59) and concerning the Law and the OT scripture in the whole Gospel.

were contemporaneous with the evangelist. This crucified-risen Jesus was both then, physically, and now, spiritually, already, 'out there' and real. Our concern, therefore, has to be with the historical question of how this historical Jesus was understood and believed and with the theological question of how the crucified-risen Jesus was believed in and understood both by those who were contemporary with the evangelist and by our contemporaries.

For the evangelist, the earlier part of his Gospel was, in the light of the belief in the risen Lord, an appropriate context for presenting the Gospel-story of the cleansing of the temple, which contains the evangelist's interpretation of the event and Jesus' words. Historical appropriateness, however, would locate these two events, the cleansing and the resurrection, closer to the end of the Gospel-life, as other evangelists did. It is apparent that there is a combination of the subject-matters of history and theology and a fusion of the contents of history and theology in the construction of the Gospel-life of Jesus. If the historical and theological contexts may at times coincide, they may also diverge. If according to Collingwood a thought may subsequently be revived, it may also, as it were, be anticipated, as it is, by the evangelist.<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing consideration yields this understanding: in presenting the Gospel-life of Jesus from his coming or incarnation to his departure or death-resurrection, the Fourth Gospel gives readers an impression that the Gospel-life progresses historically

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1. The memory motif in 2.21 supports our observation. In M. Oakeshott's words, the "historical past" and the "practical past" (v. his Experience and its Modes, p.103) are mingled and fused together in the Fourth Gospel. v. also D. M. Emmet, The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking, chap.VII, "Theology, Philosophy and History".



according to the progress of the empirical life of Jesus. However, this view is rather difficult to maintain in view of historical research. The logical sequence of the structure of the Gospel and the arrangement of narratives and discourses are explained better in terms of the theological interest of the evangelist, although the historical interest and logical concern of the evangelist should not be overlooked. The view in question is, in fact, almost impossible for a historian to entertain, since human historical knowledge of the historical Jesus can at its best only be an approximation to it. Besides, according to Collingwood,<sup>1</sup> one thought can exist in different contexts without losing its identity, although without some appropriate context it could never exist. Thus, we may be able to see how both the historical perspectives and theological contexts of the Gospel-stories about Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are often similar to but more often different from those of the Synoptic Gospels. The Fourth evangelist is a Christian theologian in his own right.<sup>3</sup>

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1. v. The Idea of History, pp.298-302.

2. cf. C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, and his discussion of "the cleansing of the Temple", pp.156-162 and on "The appearances of the Risen Christ", pp.142-151. Of the former, Dodd says that the evangelist's christological interest is transparent and of the latter, in Dodd's words, "... any traditional Passion narrative would follow the primitive formula ... (I Cor.XV. 3-5) ... But in the accounts of these appearances we can no longer discern the common primitive pattern of narrative; each evangelist goes his own way, and only in the Fourth Gospel is something apparently preserved of the chronological structure characteristic of other parts of the Passion narrative." (p.143).

3. The evangelist's viewpoint pertains to a higher viewpoint. It is based upon the four fundamental Christian beliefs, the belief in God, Jesus, the incarnation and resurrection. Hence it may be called the Christian post-resurrection faith viewpoint. While the Fourth evangelist is explicit in his presentation of both the incarnation and resurrection faith, the evangelists of the Synoptic Gospels are rather implicit in their presentation of the incarnation faith, especially the evangelist of Mark's Gospel.

At this juncture, some of the logical contexts within Christian theological discourse may be identified, sc. historical, philosophical and theological contexts. By logical context is meant a literary structure by which distinctive thought about meaning, such as historical, philosophical or theological, is consciously differentiated and lucidly articulated in order to yield an ordered contextual intelligibility and reasonableness. Just as the science of history can be a study of history from the specific viewpoint of history, of philosophy, of theology, or from a combination of all of these, and just as the science of philosophy can be operated in the same various ways, so also the science of theology can be a study of it from these various viewpoints, separately or in combination. Hence an adequately differentiated consciousness of these various viewpoints and contexts, perspectives and horizons, and of their various levels and functions is not only desirable but also is required for a better understanding and a more effective interpretation and communication of the Christian gospel.

The present work may be said to operate on three frontiers in accordance with the three sciences. For it is a study of human witnessing-believing-understanding of the Christian gospel. It attempts to unfold the philosophical implications of Christian theology. Once the insight into the possibility or viability of a philosophy of Christian evangelical theology that will emerge out of the combination of these three sciences, sc. history, philosophy and theology, has been grasped, and once a further insight into what we have already grasped has been grasped, the compound of the first and the second order insights may reveal the possibility or viability of

an organisation, systematisation, integration and unification of an universe of discourse of a present day Christian's theology. Hence the present work entails a methodical, critical and comprehensive outlook.

The historical, philosophical and theological accuracy of a modern Christian's historical, philosophical and theological imagination and reasoning, articulation and presentation, is important when one deals with the Fourth Gospel as a Christian classic. However, the Fourth evangelist is neither a historian nor a philosopher nor a theologian as such in the modern sense of the term. Besides, his Gospel was not written for historians, philosophers or theologians as such. It was written for religious people and for a religious purpose. Nevertheless, in view of the accumulated scholarship of the interpretation and understanding of the Fourth Gospel throughout those Christian centuries, a present day Christian needs to make a critical analysis and metaphysical synthesis of his own study of the theological thought of the Gospel. In this way he may be able to examine more critically and more comprehensibly how the evangelist, grounded upon the four fundamental Christian beliefs, had viewed the gospel-life of Jesus as a compound whole but from two different perspectives. The first is the retrospective or recollective perspective, sc. the perspective from the higher and more comprehensive viewpoint of the resurrection and incarnation faith, and from the historical and more confined standpoint of the evangelist around the year A.D. 90. The second is the prospective or anticipative perspective, sc. the perspective from the higher and more comprehensive viewpoint of the incarnation and



resurrection faith, and from the historical and more confined standpoint of the earthly Jesus around the year A.D. 28. Further, a present day Christian, on the basis of a more adequately differentiated consciousness, may be able to see more clearly and more precisely the way in which the evangelist presented the Gospel-life of Jesus in a compound manner within the solidary context that combines those three elements, history, philosophy and theology.

It has been considered<sup>1</sup> that the word 'now' or 'present' can mean or cover various durations or periods of time, including one's past, present and future, depending on the living context one is in. Thus the 'now' or the present of Jesus involves or subsumes his past, present and future at any given point and instant of his earthly life. However, in view of the overall Gospel-image of the Johannine Jesus, his past includes the pre-existent period, the creation of the world, the incarnation and whatever else intervenes up to his present (ca. A.D. 28), and his future or his post-existence includes the period from his present (ca. A.D. 28), his crucifixion, death-resurrection and further extends to the final consummation of the creation and beyond. This then is the retrospective and prospective perspective panorama portrayed from the standpoint of the earthly Jesus around the year A.D. 28, within the framework of the linear concept of time and history, of the ontologically structured metaphysical system, and of the incarnation and resurrection faith.

Now, if the Johannine Gospel-life of Jesus is viewed from the standpoint of the evangelist around the year A.D. 90, the whole

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1. Above, pp.62f.

earthly life of Jesus pertains to the past of the evangelist and of the risen Jesus. Nevertheless, theologically speaking, the evangelist could have imagined, thought about and reasoned about the Gospel-life of Jesus and its implications from the viewpoint of the spiritual insight by means of which he believed he was able to represent the insight of Jesus and of God and hence to be able to bear witness to Jesus and to God (15.26f.). That is to say when the evangelist, as a Christian believer, reflects upon the overall Gospel-image of Jesus, he is able to employ or adapt a more comprehensive and higher viewpoint than other evangelists. That viewpoint subsumes

- (a) God's viewpoint, because of his belief in God,
- (b) the viewpoint of the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-post-existent Jesus, because of his belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, his divine origin and destiny, and
- (c) the viewpoint of Christians, Jews and of the whole of mankind.

The foregoing analysis exhibits the evangelist's historical, philosophical and theological understanding, that, although there are two distinguishable historical standpoints, i.e. the one of Jesus in ca. A.D. 28 and the other of the evangelist in ca. A.D. 90, the two are fused or inter-penetrated in such a way that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel has a compound character, sc. that of the incarnate-crucified-risen Jesus, of the divine-human Jesus, and of

the one who speaks now earthly things and now heavenly things. The Johannine Jesus who is believed in, understood and presented by the evangelist is the Christians' Jesus. In this Jesus, the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-post-existent Jesus is 'incapsulated'. This is what we have called the overall Gospel-image of the Johannine Jesus or the Gospel-life of Jesus.

In short, within the horizon of this overall Gospel-image or the Gospel-life of Jesus, all that is implied in the incarnation and resurrection faith is incapsulated, embraced or embodied in the Christians' Jesus as portrayed by the evangelist. The Johannine Jesus, therefore, carries with him all the positive aspects, all the prerogatives, the grace and truth, the glory and honour, the authority and dignity, the love and joy, the peace and courage of the divine-human Messiah and the divine-human Son of God.

The apprehension of this insight has been possible when and as a modern Christian is equipped both with a standpoint firmly and confidently grounded in history and the historical Jesus, and with a higher and more comprehensive and penetrating viewpoint, that orients itself towards the Christians' God and Jesus, humanity and nature, and is able to reflect upon the Johannine Gospel-life of Jesus within the ontologically structured metaphysical system of the theological thought of the evangelist.

In the next section we shall consider the three frames of reference of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel, which should eventually help and guide us to see better and more coherently the ways and problems of the articulation and expression of both the



evangelist and our contemporaries in his and our witnessing-believing-understanding of the Christian Gospel.

2. The three frames of reference<sup>1</sup> of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel

Before we go on to consider the three frames of reference which can guide us to unfold the complexity of the evangelist's theological thought, a word has to be said about the doctrine of creation which is known and believed as part and parcel of the Judaeo-Christian world-view or sometimes called the biblical world-view, which some theologians attempt to demythologise.<sup>2</sup>

We all know that every community has its own story of origin, because it finds there its identity and further it can express its expectation and aspiration through the story. In this, the Christian community is no exception.<sup>3</sup> For theists, however, theistic belief comes first. For God is the ground of faith and of all other theological beliefs and doctrines.<sup>4</sup> While all theologies must begin with the statement or rubric, 'in the beginning god or gods',

1. "Frames of reference are structures of relations employed to order totalities of extensions and/or durations". B. J. F. Lonergan, Insight, pp.144f.

2. Notably R. Bultmann and those who profess to belong to the "Bultmannian school".

3. v. B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, pp.118f. v. also John 8.31-47; and 9.28, "... You are his (Jesus') disciple, but we are disciples of Moses."

4. v. B. J. F. Lonergan, Ibid., p.119, on the distinction between faith and belief.

Jewish theology begins with 'in the beginning God' and Judaeo-Christian theology with 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus in the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of creation, God the creator and the Word, the mediator of creation, are the primary axioms of belief and the ground of the possibility of knowledge: the primary axioms of belief, because without God and the Word there will be neither the doctrine of God's creation nor the theistic world-view; the ground of the possibility of knowledge, because without the belief in God and in the Word there will be no conceptual and logical connection between any given world-view and the actual relation of God to the world. In other words, the Judaeo-Christian belief in God the creator and in the Word, the mediator, is the logical presupposition and the causal ground of human witnessing-believing-understanding of divine revelation and of human existence and culture.<sup>2</sup>

That the world was created by God and through the divine Word is mentioned in vv. 3, 10 of the prologue. The context, vv. 9-13, shows that mankind is divided into those who do not know the mediator and those who believe in him. The passage reads,

"The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him. Yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all

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1. v. B. J. F. Lonergan, *Ibid.*, pp.112-124. Sections 6, "The Word", 7, "Faith", 8, "Religious Belief", and 9, "A Technical Note" are relevant to our discussion.

2. v. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Eng.tr., vol.2, Part III, chaps.III, "The 'Krisis' of the World" and IV, "Faith", pp.33-92.

who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but of God." (John 1.9-13).

We note that the evangelist appeals to the belief which is common to both groups, that the world was created by God through the Word. Naturally, this appeal is valid and intelligible only on the ground of the belief in and of the knowledge of the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of creation and theistic world-view.

But our insight into John 1.1-13 is that the evangelist appeals to their believing-understanding of God, of the Word, of the world and/or of the divine creation as the ground of the communication between God, Jesus of Nazareth, the Word incarnate, and mankind. Since this witnessing-believing-understanding is the ground of communication, it is also the ground of judgement, judgement unto salvation and condemnation.

As regards the mediator's own home, in the light of the believing-understanding of the doctrine of creation, the place may be Palestine, if we are correct in thinking in terms of a particular locality, or it may be anywhere in the world, if we are to think in general terms or of the created world as a whole. His own people can be interpreted as referring to the Jews of the pre-incarnation time or to all those who did not know the mediator from the beginning of the creation until the time when the evangelist wrote the Gospel. The insight we have grasped is this, that the theological, christological and anthropological issues as well as the historical and soteriological



issues are tied up with our commonly accepted spatial and temporal frames of reference, theistic world-view and theistic view of human being. While literary, source, textual, historical, philosophical and theological criticisms are all important, frames of reference are needed also for a better analysis and sound judgement, hence for a proper interpretation of the theological thought of the Fourth Gospel, and for a more systematic and effective communication of that analysis and interpretation.

There are, in my opinion, three frames of reference which can guide us to analyse as well as to synthesize the complex modes of the evangelist's thought.

- (1) The temporal frame of reference.
- (2) The spatial frame of reference.
- (3) The distinction-within-unity frame of reference.

They will be considered separately, but they form an unified whole of the discourse of Christian evangelical theology which employs an ontologically structured metaphysical system.

- (1) The temporal frame of reference

The temporal frame of reference is indispensable for the ways of historical consciousness and understanding in which men and women think, and reason, judge and make decisions on the commonsense, scientific and other levels of life, but also indispensable in the articulation and communication of their understanding of themselves, their birth, origin and existence, life and work, cultural evolution and religious or spiritual aspirations and finally death and destiny.

However, on this frame of reference we can be quite simple. For in the previous two chapters it has been explored. We here simply recapitulate what has been considered there.

In chapter I, we employed the linear concept of time and history and within that temporal frame of reference we attempted to interpret some of the problematic texts of the Fourth Gospel, such as 1.15, "He who comes after me ranks before me."; 8.58, "... before Abraham was, I am."; and 12.41, "Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him." We have also seen that the complexity of thought lies in the fusion or overlapping of historical and theological thinking and reasoning, assertion and affirmation that are enclosed in the texts. Once the complexity has been analysed in terms of the past-present-future linear temporal frame of reference, we are in a better position to understand the historical and theological meaning of the texts in question. We also have seen that it is when men and women take seriously their understanding of human relational happening in the emerging present, i.e. in their contemporary living situation and in the newly emerging contexts, that by means of that temporal frame of reference they are enabled to see more clearly the significant implications of the insight into the existential, dynamic and religious aspects of the Christian gospel-events for Christians' daily living and renewed encounters with the living God, the crucified-risen Jesus and the respective living individuals, groups and generations and for the ongoing mission in the world with which Christians have been entrusted.

In chapter II, we employed the same linear, temporal frame of reference to explain the 'Judaeo-Jesus-Christian' theology in

transition and the articulation of the Fourth evangelist concerning the origin, formation and development of the Christian evangelical theology of the early Church in the light of his own fresh Christian experiences and those of his contemporaries. We have seen that the Judaeo-Christian theology has to emphasise history because of the origin, identity and survival of the Christian faith and religion. It is the belief in Jesus, a particular historical figure, and his concrete concern for humanity in its historical existence in its contemporary world situation, that constrains Christian theologians to wrestle with the questions latent in the compound of history and theology. We have sporadically considered in chapters I and II, how Jesus of Nazareth, his life, history and theology, is not only the content of the Christian gospel but also the norm of Christian life and theology. In all these studies, the linear type of temporal frame of reference, among others, is indispensable.

## (2) The spatial frame of reference

We have considered earlier in the present chapter that the incarnation faith implies that Jesus is the divine Word incarnate and the Son of God who was sent from God and came down from heaven - the content of the Christian belief expressed in terms of movement in space. Further, the resurrection faith implies that the crucified Jesus was raised, vindicated and exalted to be the Lord and Saviour. The evangelist explained Jesus' death in terms of his departure from the world and going back to the Father in heaven, and after the exaltation his return to his disciples on earth - again the content of Christian belief expressed in terms of movement in space.



The divine abode is in heaven. This idea is common to all cultures. But it has not been popular in certain theological camps. Even where it is not unpopular, most feel that the heaven-earth spatial frame of reference is mythological in form, and suspect the intelligibility of its employment in theological discourse, where its doctrinal significance is on the wane, and in communicating the Christian gospel to non-believers, where this frame of reference has no existential impact in the age of space science and advanced technology.

However the function of the spatial frame of reference has to be re-evaluated more carefully. Can human beings, who have body and mind in distinction-within-unity and who must employ conceptual structures in their cultural activities, really discard the heaven-earth spatial frame of reference? Even if Christian theologians have to take into account that the modes of expression of the truth and value of religious beliefs, which are articulated at different times and places for particular needs of certain believing communities, may become outdated or even obsolete, they still have to employ the spatial frame of reference to formulate the reality of complex kaleidoscopic human experience in a hierarchical order, or structure of relations in their theological discourse.

Let us consider some of the problems which are concerned with the employment of the heaven-earth spatial frame of reference in the evangelist's presentation of the Gospel-stories.

In John 1.32, the evangelist testified by the mouth of the baptist that "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and

it remained on him (Jesus)." By means of the heaven-earth spatial frame of reference, the evangelist expressed the motion and movement of the Spirit. The mystery is not in the word 'heaven', but in the 'Spirit' which descended from heaven and remained on Jesus, the mystery of life and power. Further, the Spirit is the Spirit of God, and God is the root of life and power. Hence, the mystery in question pertains to the mystery of God.<sup>1</sup>

Of God as the transcendental mystery and of the question of whether God is an object Lonergan<sup>2</sup> has this to say:

"... God's gift of his love (Rom. 5.5) is not something that results from or is conditioned by man's knowledge of God. Far more plausibly it would seem that the gift may precede our knowledge of God and, indeed, may be the cause of our seeking knowledge of God.<sup>3</sup> In that case the gift by itself would be an orientation towards an unknown ... It is, then an orientation to what is transcendent in loveliness and, when that is unknown, it is an orientation to transcendental mystery."

"Now an orientation to transcendental mystery is basic to systematic theology. It provides the primary and fundamental meaning of the name, God. It can be the

1. cf. "God is Spirit" (4.24); Christians are born of the Spirit (3.5); to those who received and believed in Jesus, he gave them (Spirit-power?) to become children of God; they were born of God (1.12f.). Here the Spirit of God and of Jesus given to believers is life and power. ἐξουσίαν

2. Method in Theology, pp.340-344.

3. Lonergan's footnote 6, "cf. Pascal's remarks: 'Take comfort, you would not be seeking me if you had not already found me'. Pensees vii, 553." (Ibid., p.341).

bond uniting all men despite cultural differences. It provides the origin for inquiry about God, for seeking assurance of his existence, for endeavouring to reach some understanding of the mysteries of faith. At the same time, it is quite in harmony with the conviction that no system we can construct will encompass or plumb or master the mystery by which we are held ..."

"However, if there is to be an affirmative or kataphatic, as well as a negative or apophatic, theology, there must be confronted the question whether God is an object. Now certainly God is not an object in the naive realist sense of what is already out there now, or already up there now, or already in here now. Further he is not an object if one retreats from naive realism to an empiricism, a naturalism, or an idealism. But if by an object one means anything that is intended in questions and known through correct answers, anything within the world, mediated by meaning, then a distinction has to be drawn." (pp.340f.).

The evangelist, like all the other evangelists,<sup>1</sup> used the image of a dove to express the motion of the Spirit descending from heaven and remaining on Jesus. A dove is a visible object of sense; the Spirit not. What kind of object then is the Spirit? The Johannine Jesus said to his disciples,

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1. Mt 3.16f. // Mk 1.10f. // Lk 3.21f. Note that the expression of the Lukan version, "the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove", is physically a more vivid expression.



" ... I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you." (14.16f.).

Christians know that the Spirit, so far from being just the object of their thought, i.e. a mere idea or concept, is the living indwelling Spirit of truth who is contemporaneous with all post-Easter Christian generations. This, the contemporaneity, is probably the meaning of the present tense 'dwells' and the future tense 'will be' in the passage.

However, our theological discourse, which employs an ontologically structured system, has to take account of the distinction-within-unity correlation between the object of sense, of thought and of commitment and worship. Thus John 1.32 does not refer to the baptist's ocular vision of the Spirit in the form of a real dove descending and remaining on Jesus. Nor does it refer to his intellectual seeing, sc. his understanding, of the meaning of the baptism of Jesus, nor to his spiritual seeing, sc. his apprehension of the spiritual or religious insight into the event within the intellectual and spiritual horizon of the baptist. We have to admit that we cannot identify his seeing the Spirit with any one of the three above-mentioned types of seeing. For the Spirit is invisible just as God is invisible to our physical eyes. Nevertheless, the text, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him", may have a symbolic significance for explaining the person and work of the man Jesus. For example, " ... this is he who baptizes with

the Holy Spirit." (1.33); " ... This is the Son of God." (1.34); and " ... Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (1.30). The readers of the Gospel may be able to see in the sense of an ocular vision and of insight, and imagine a real dove descending and remaining on Jesus. But unless they have the religious beliefs which are congruous with those of the evangelist, they cannot share the evangelist's imagination and spiritual insight into the symbolical character and significance of the Gospel-story of the baptist's vision. In other words, the issue with John 1.32 is that of the Spirit and its activity, sc. the issue of being (ontology) and of becoming (genomenology), together with that of the evangelist's testimony and our understanding.

Since the Spirit transcends human physical, mental and spiritual reality or aspect of life and activity, Christian talk of the Spirit has to employ analogically, metaphorically, symbolically and mythologically the spatio-temporal frame of reference. But its analogical, metaphorical, symbolical and mythological function has to be constantly transcended. Thus we have to differentiate these two types of expression.

- (a) The expression articulated by means of the spatio-temporal frame of reference. This expression can directly refer to objects of sense and thought, of belief and spirit that lie within the common experience of human being.
- (b) The expression articulated by means of the analogically, metaphorically, symbolically and

mythologically employed spatio-temporal frame of reference. This expression (though directly referring to the objects of sense and thought, of belief and spirit that lie within the common experience of human being) aims at referring analogically, metaphorically, symbolically or mythologically to the objects of thought, of belief and of spirit that may or may not lie within the experience of every human being.

The latter expression, in fact, aims analogically, metaphorically, symbolically and mythologically at the objects or the transcendental notions, that lie within the transcendental field.<sup>1</sup> Further, when the analogical, metaphorical, symbolical and mythological function of that expression has been transcended, the analogy, metaphor, symbol and myth employed can aim at referring to or symbolising both the transcendental notions (the doctrine or the image of God, that of <sup>the</sup> incarnate-crucified-risen Jesus and that of the Spirit) and the transcendental beings (God, the incarnate-crucified-risen Jesus and the Spirit). These transcendental notions are those which are held by all those who absolutely presuppose them. And the transcendental beings are those in whom Christians believe and whom they worship.

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1. Of the transcendental notions and field B. J. F. Lonergan has this to say: "... while it is, of course, true that human knowing is limited, still the transcendental notions are not a matter of knowing but of intending; they intended all that each of us has managed to learn, and they now intend all that as yet remains unknown. In other words, the transcendental field is defined not by what man knows, not by what he can know, but by what he can ask about ..." "... the objects of theology do not lie outside the transcendental field. For the field is unrestricted, and so outside it there is nothing at all." Method in Theology, pp.23f. This observation is intelligible and reasonable from the point of view, or within the confines, of an ontologically structured metaphysical system of human understanding.



Let us consider John 1.51,<sup>1</sup> "You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man". This is a very realistic and commonsense way of expressing the relational happening or communication between God and the Son of man in the world. Again movement is stressed - "the angels of God ascending and descending". Readers are reminded of the story of Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28.12. Two passages from Genesis are relevant in this connection: Genesis 28.10-17 and 32.22-30, with special attention to 28.12, 16f. and 32.28, 30. The former, 28.12, 16f., refers to the ascending and descending of the angels of God. This is Jacob's faith statement. The latter, 32.28, 30, refers to the naming of Jacob as Israel and Jacob's confession of faith. Both stories are expressed in the form of a vision seen in his dream. Some elements which constitute the stories are noteworthy, such as Jacob's relation with Esau and with God. Those elements constitute the Sitz im Leben that brought about the occasion of his fresh understanding of God. This fresh understanding is based upon the dream, but nevertheless it is his fresh experience, contingent upon his belief in God and in God's promise.

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1. Recently more and more exegetes see the importance and centrality of this text, in that it is the concluding statement of John chap.1. It is also Jesus' answer to Nathanael's christological confession. Further, the word 'hereafter' has a special significance in that it relates, or acts as a transitional catalyst, between chap.1 and the rest of the Gospel. The importance and centrality of the text are to be found also in the theological (wider sense) presentation of the symbolical significance of the phrase, "ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (ie. the communication and communion between the Son of man on earth and God in heaven) in the whole ministry of the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-post-existent Jesus on earth. See S. S. Smalley, John: Evangelist and Interpreter, and his discussion of this text and the structure of the Gospel.

We can elaborate in detail and in depth the similarity and dissimilarity between the story of Jacob and the story of Jesus. There are two matters which entail our special attention:

- (a) the ascending and descending of the angels of God upon the Son of man in relation to the ascending and descending of the Son of man, and
- (b) the naming of Jesus as the King of Israel rather than <sup>as</sup> the King of the Jews.

In contrast to the inscription on the cross "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (19.19), at the occasion of his entry into Jerusalem, the crowd called him "He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel" (12.13). While Jacob is named "Israel", Jesus is named "the King of Israel". This naming is quite significant for the evangelist and the early Church.<sup>1</sup>

The Son of man is always depicted in the Fourth Gospel not as in heaven or as riding on a cloud, but as stationed on earth. In order to explain the movement of the ascending and descending, it might be possible to suspend<sup>2</sup> any question about the angels or the question of our contemporaries' experience of them. However, we cannot stop our inquiry at this level. We must ask, Are there

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1. cf. S. Pancaro, "The Relationship of the Church to Israel in the Gospel of St John", in NES, vol.21, No.3, April, 1975, pp.398-401.

2. In the world of science, questions concerning subsidiary elements may be suspended for the sake of clarity of explanation. For the same purpose, we may be allowed to suspend subsidiary questions concerning elements in our interpretation of the text.

differences between these beliefs: the belief in the angels of God, the Spirit of God and the belief in God or in Jesus? It is clear that the essential questions for Christian theology (wider sense) are questions about God and Jesus, because 'angels' and 'Spirit' are ancillary ideas or images for clarifying the reality of the person and activity of God and Jesus.

If the subsidiary element, 'angels', were suspended and the essential, 'God', retained, John 1.51 could be understood as 'You will see heaven opened, and God ascending and descending upon the Son of man'. Since in the Fourth Gospel the Son of man is always depicted as being on earth, it is God who does the ascending and descending. Moreover, the Johannine overall Gospel-image of Jesus grounds the theological understanding of the ascending and descending of the Son of man. Thus we may understand 1.51 as meaning something like: 'You (in plural, sc. believers) will see heaven opened and the Son of man (sc. the Christians' Jesus) on earth in continual communication with God in heaven'. Perhaps, this is the message which the evangelist attempted to convey to his readers.

Could we go further and say that today we may not need to express the same gospel message in the evangelist's terms? Nevertheless, we are obliged to ask why the evangelist had to use such a mode of expression? Is the idea that God is distinct from man what is presupposed in the heaven-earth spatial frame of reference of the biblical world-view? Man is always on earth and God in heaven. Man cannot reach God but God can reach man. To men before the modern space age a heavenly abode seemed to be a sensible solution for



locating God, the transcendental being, and for expressing the descending and ascending grace and truth of this God.

However, the evangelist has attempted another solution. He has also presented the same truth, the communication between God and human beings, in terms of the love-fellowship. Jesus says, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we (sc. God the Father and the Son) will come to him and make our home with him." (14.23). These words express the evangelist's belief in the contemporaneity of God the Father and the Son with the believer in terms of communion.

The intimate relationship between God, Jesus and human beings can be expressed in terms of God's revelation and human knowing of it in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> It can also be explained in terms of the communication or communion between God, Jesus and human beings. It is a present living personal and interpersonal relational happening between God, Jesus and human being.

While the temporal and spatial frames of reference are needed for articulating the Christian Gospel-event, there is one more frame of reference which we have to consider next.

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1. cf. John 14.15-23, the teaching of the indwelling Spirit and of the mutual indwelling between the Father, the Son, the Spirit and human beings. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth (14.17; 15.26; 16.13). "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." See also 15.26, 27a, " ... even the Spirit of truth, ..., he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, "; 16.13f., "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

## (3) The distinction-within-unity frame of reference

Chapter 14 of the Fourth Gospel provides the data and context for our discussion. The context of the discourse in this chapter is the imminent departure of Jesus from his disciples, his return to the Father and the subsequent reunion between Jesus and his disciples. Our primary concern now is the interpersonal relations between these four entities; Jesus who is leaving, his disciples who remain in the world, the Father who has many rooms in his house (vv.1-3) and the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth (vv.15-17, 25f.), who will be sent to be with the disciples for ever.

The Johannine Jesus summons his disciples to believe in God and also in him (v.1). This is the unique characteristic of the Judaeo-Christian religion. It is an issue both for the disciples who were contemporary with the historical Jesus and for the Christians who were contemporary with the evangelist. In fact it is an issue for Christians and non-Christians of all ages.

Let us see first how the Johannine Jews reacted to Jesus. When Jesus said, "I shall be with you a little longer, and then I go to him who sent me ... where I am you cannot come." (7.33f.), they raised the question in an ironical tone, " ... Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?" (7.35). To Jesus' words, "I go away, and you will seek me and die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come", they answered in a sarcastic manner, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?' (8.21f.).

Jesus' words of comfort and promise in chapter 14.1-4 open the

way for his disciples to raise reflective questions. Thomas representing the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, how can we know the way?" (14.5). Jesus' answer is, "I am the way ... no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also, henceforth you know him and have seen him." (vv.6f.).

Philip then put the more fundamental question to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." (v.8). Jesus answered, "Have I been with you so long and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (v.9). This answer of Jesus apparently solved the issue, but in fact the question turns up again and again in the human quest for God in every generation. The answer involves two fundamental Christian beliefs, the belief in God and in Jesus. The ultimate issue is the correlation or the reciprocity between the belief in God and in Jesus. It is the issue presented in John 14.1.<sup>1</sup>

Before we proceed further, two commonly acknowledged factors should be stated. For it is within the confines of the stated conditions, that the discourse of Christian evangelical theology is pursued.

First, no one has ever seen God (1.18; cf. 3.11-13). The disciple's request "Show us the Father" (14.9), would have satisfied the fundamental religious need and would terminate, from the human

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1. We today, who read the Fourth Gospel many times, can see that the ground of this belief has been already laid down by the evangelist in 1.1-5.



point of view, all theological, empirical and epistemological controversies. But this is exactly what no man can do, neither the man Jesus nor the Johannine Jesus. While both the disciples and the Johannine Jews asked the same question, the question posed by the Jews showed their contempt, "Where is your Father?" (8.19), because of their antagonistic attitude towards and disbelief in Jesus.

Second, no one is able to see the historical Jesus in the post-Easter era as Jesus' contemporaries saw him in Palestine. But why did not the evangelist or the early Church raise the question and request, 'Show us Jesus?' They did not ask and did not need to ask it, because the Gospel-life of Jesus is presented as he is on earth, and no one doubted that this Jesus was once a historical figure. But there is also the additional Christian testimony to the risen, living, contemporaneous Jesus. The Gospel-life of Jesus presented as such gives a quite different impact - the impact of the identity of Jesus' human and divine origin, presence, activity and destiny.

The Johannine Jesus calls or appeals to his disciples to believe in him because of the mutual indwelling between Jesus and the Father, or to believe for the sake of his works. He says,

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his work. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe for the sake of the works themselves." (John 14.10f.).

But this saying raises another problem which is our present concern - the distinction-within-unity correlation by which the evangelist articulates the relation between Jesus and God.

To believe in God the Father is problematic. To believe in Jesus, the Son of God, is also problematic. Neither Christians of the evangelist's time nor those of today can show their own contemporaries either God or Jesus. The questions, where God is and where the risen Jesus is, are posed in terms of a spatial frame of reference.<sup>1</sup>

However, we have seen that the first two frames of reference, the temporal and the spatial, can guide us to a better understanding of the evangelist's articulation of his theological thought about the pre- or post-existent Jesus, about God, their presence and absence, coming and going, etc., and about the scope of the nature and character of the thought-world of the discourse of Christian evangelical theology. Nevertheless, they have not been able really to solve some of the intricate problems involved in the complex correlations between theology and history, between God and Jesus, between God and mankind, and between Jesus and mankind.<sup>2</sup>

The real and essential issues are that of the person of God and of Jesus, of ontology, sc. does God, does Jesus exist? of genomenology, sc. is God, is Jesus alive and active? The issue is especially acute when Christian theologians have no other alternative

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1. Again cf. 1.18; 3.13f.; 14.1-3.

2. v. above, pp.20-36, our discussion on theistic belief and the theistic world-view, which are on the wane.

than to employ an ontologically structured metaphysical system in their theological discourse. Who is God? Who is Jesus? Or what is God? What is Jesus? Are we asking for the meaning of God<sup>1</sup> and of Jesus? The saying of Jesus in chapter 14.10f. intends to express the unity of rather than the distinction between the Father and the Son.<sup>2</sup> Since the Johannine Jesus is always depicted as being on earth and the Johannine God in heaven, the distinction between them is self-evident. It is this very self-evident distinction, that God and Jesus are markedly distinctive individuals, which scandalised the Johannine Jews and constituted the embarrassment of the incarnation and the resurrection faith.<sup>3</sup>

It is when God the Father and God the Son are thought of or believed to be simultaneously in heaven and on earth without temporal or spatial distinction, or to be imminent in as well as to transcend mankind and the world, that Christian thinking and reasoning are said to violate the historical reality of the Christians'

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1. Of the meaning of God, B. J. F. Lonergan has this to say: "On what I have called the primary and fundamental meaning of the name, God, God is not an object. For that meaning is the term of an orientation to transcendent mystery. Such an orientation, while it is the climax of the self-transcending process of raising questions, nonetheless is not properly a matter of raising and answering questions. So far from lying within the world mediated by meaning, it is the principle that can draw people out of that world and into the cloud of unknowing ... But God comes within the world mediated by meaning in far more common ways. One's fundamental concern springs from God's gift of his love, but one's questions begin from the world and from man ... Above all, in a religion that is shared by many, that enters into and transforms cultures, that extends down the ages, God will be named, questions about him will be asked, answers will be forthcoming. In still another manner God becomes an object in the very precise sense of what is intended in questions and known by correct answers." Method in Theology, p.342.

2. The whole of chapter 14 presents the unity between God, Jesus, the paraclete and Jesus' disciples, and their, individual and communal, relations with humanity and the world.

3. Here again the unity between the Father and the Son is pre-supposed, cf. 1.1, 18; etc.



experience of God, Jesus and their inter-personal relations on earth. Further, it is when God and Jesus, who are markedly distinct individuals, are located in two particular places, spheres or realms, or in two particular times or events without spiritual unity or logical correlation, that Christian theological thinking and reasoning are said to violate the heavenly spiritual reality of the Christians' experience of God, Jesus and their inter-personal relationships on earth. Thus the historical and spiritual distinction or unity, or the logical relation have to be kept in sight without confusion or separation, lest Christian theological discourse should jeopardise both the historical and the spiritual reality which inextricably blend or interlock within the reality of the Christian religious experience of God, Jesus, human beings and their inter-personal relationships.

On this showing, the question of our knowledge of God is the question of our knowledge of Jesus, and vice versa. In this sense, the Johannine Jews raised a very realistic issue about the historical Jesus and a very fundamental issue about the Christians' Jesus. "Who are you?" (8.25) and "Who do you claim to be?" (8.53), they asked Jesus. We have to bear in mind that these questions are directed to Jesus on earth and not to Jesus in heaven or the risen Jesus. Nevertheless, the answer the evangelist gives his prospective readers in 8.42 reads, "... If God were your (sc. the Jews') Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God ...". This answer clearly presupposes the incarnation faith or the knowledge of the overall Gospel-image of Jesus.

Let us consider how the evangelist handled these questions: "Who are you?" (8.25) and "Who do you claim to be?" (8.53). "Where is your Father?" (8.19). These are also questions common to all post-Easter Christian generations.<sup>1</sup> We shall consider the two answers in chapter 14.1-3 and 23, which virtually involve all three frames of reference.

(a) The first answer is given in John 14.1-3.

This passage gives us the impression that the Father's house is somewhere out there in heaven. It is the place where Jesus is going. It is quite natural that the analogy of the spatial frame of reference gives us the image of locality, place, rooms in the Father's house. Jesus' promise to come back again and to take them to where he is, is expressed thus, "And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." (14.3).

The sentence, "When I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again ...", is expressed in the temporal frame of reference. Thus this saying gives believers a vision that they can wait for.

But it is the distinction-within-unity frame of reference, by which the re-unification between God, Jesus and his disciples is explained, that provides greater illumination and ultimate significance to the looked-for event of his coming again, of their seeing and meeting him again, and of their living together with him.

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1. Jesus' answer to the Christians of all generations is to be found in chaps.13-17, and indeed in the whole Gospel; to the Jews his answer is to be found in 8.54-58 and, in a wider context, in 8.12-59 and again, in the whole Gospel.

The passage, John 14.1-3, in effect, gives the vision of reunion and communion to prospective readers of the Gospel or Jesus' disciples. How much more can the disciples expect the bliss, joy and peace of meeting Jesus again and of living together in the Father's house with God the Father, with Jesus and with all fellow believers?<sup>1</sup>

(b) The second answer is given in John 14.23.

14.23 reads, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we (sc. the Father and the Son) will come to him and make our home with him."

Most commentators on this text point out that 'our home' in v.23 and 'many rooms' in v.2, use the same Greek word, *μονή*. However, in v.23 the location of the Father's house has been moved down to the earth. 'Our home' is the home where God, Jesus and the disciples, who love Jesus and keep his words, live together. While in v.3 Jesus will come down again and take his disciples back to the Father's place, in v.23 God the Father and the Son will come to his disciple and live with him.<sup>2</sup> Thus this new home will be on earth where his disciples are rather than in heaven or somewhere else,

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1. The occasion or situation is that Jesus is about to leave them and go to the Father, and they on earth are to wait for his return. It is a vision orientated to the future which is awkwardly circumstanced, and more questions are raised.

2. The emphasis here in 14.23 is on the assured promise of the reunion between Father, Son, the Paraclete and the disciples on earth in a vision which is orientated to the emerging present (contemporaneity is stressed) of those who love Jesus and will keep his words. v.14.15-31.



where God the Father and the Son are. This vision is the living reality of Christian believing and living - life in God and in Jesus and the life in the believing and worshipping community on earth. This living reality is a spiritual unity constituted by the inter-personal relation of love, honour, peace and joy shared by God, Jesus and each believer and believing community. Though they are on earth, they are not of the world (17.11, 14-16). Hence they do not belong to the world.<sup>1</sup>

The Christian community has to be here on earth, and has to live in the emerging present, for Jesus' promise is realised in the coming of the Father and the risen Jesus in the presence of the Paraclete with believers (14.15-31).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the community of living and believing Christians is united by a common meaning<sup>3</sup> for common good in and for the world, sc. for the glory of God and for the good of men and of the whole of God's creation.

1. Other symbols, images or models are employed to designate the Christian believing community, e.g., "Good shepherd and flock of sheep" in chap.10; and "True vine and branches" in chap.15, etc. v. C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, his discussion on "Symbolism", pp.133-143; and on "Union with God", pp.187-200.

2. v. G. Johnston, The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John. v. also W. F. Howard, The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation, pp.195-212, (on mysticism).

3. Of the relation between common meaning and community Lonergan has this to say: "Common meaning is realised by decisions and choices, especially by permanent dedication, in the love that makes families, in the loyalty that makes states, in the faith that makes religions. Community coheres or divides, begins or ends, just where the common field of experience, common understanding, common judgement begins and ends. So communities are of many kinds: linguistic, religious, cultural, social, political, domestic. They vary in extent, in age, in cohesiveness, in their oppositions to one another." Method in Theology, p.79. Earlier, on the same page he says, "The conjunction of both the constitutive and communicative function of meaning yield the three key notions of community, existence, and history." To this statement the writer ventures to add this, the conjunction of both the constitutive and efficient function of "terminal values, namely a good of order that is truly good and instances of the particular good that are truly good" (Ibid., p.50), yields also the three key notions of community, existence, and history.

Can anyone give humanity any other vision higher than this religious aspiration and longing to be with the Christian God, with the Christian Jesus and with fellow believers in the unity of the Paraclete?

Are these two answers given by the evangelist contradictory or complementary? They will be contradictory only if we think of and reason about them simultaneously without due distinction within two successive, related, but qualitatively different totalities of spatio-temporal frame of reference, the one concrete and the other abstract or imaginary. However, the imagery is not unreal.<sup>1</sup> They are complementary, if we would and could distinguish these two totalities of spatio-temporal frame of reference. Let us consider further the two pictures, images or visions in John 14.1-3 and 23.

If we employ a figure to express these various up and down movements of coming and going between heaven and earth, it will appear as Figure A.

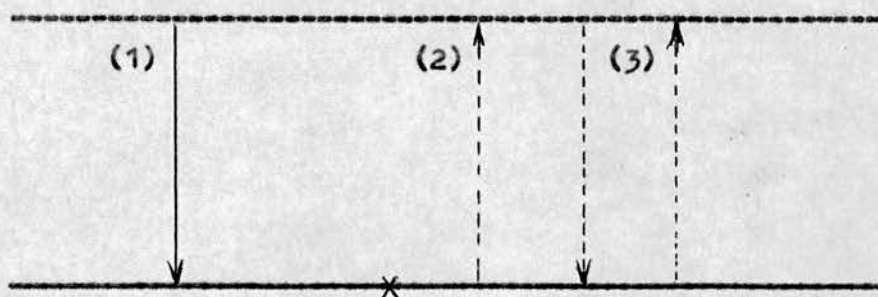
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1. cf. J. B. F. Lonergan, *Ibid.*, p.12, "In virtue of this intending, what is experienced can be the same as what is understood; what is experienced and understood can be the same as what is conceived, what is experienced and understood and conceived, can be the same as what is affirmed to be real ..."



Figure A

Heaven: Father's house

S.P. of  
Jesus

Earth: the world in which mankind lives

Explanations:

- (1) Incarnation, Jesus came down from heaven or from the Father.
- (2) Jesus' imminent departure from the world or his going back to the Father.
- (3) Jesus will come again and take them to himself, that where he is they may be also.

X = The standpoint of the historical Jesus.

From the standpoint of the historical Jesus, (1) is real to believers who accept the incarnation faith, but (2) and (3) are still in the future, hence they are just promises, emerging probabilities or hopes. However, (2) is imminent. From the standpoint of the evangelist and of us today, whether (3) is real is a question worth pondering. Is it an already fulfilled or yet unfulfilled future? As regards (2) Jesus' death is real but the meaning of his death as going back to the Father is another question. Did the evangelist, like a naïve realist, believe the historical truth of that up and down locality and ascending and descending movement between heaven and earth? What did the evangelist understand and



believe the incarnation faith to be, when Jesus proclaimed, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (6.51; cf. 6.32-35); "the Son of man who came down from heaven" (3.13; cf. 3.31-36); or "I proceeded and came forth from God." (8.42).

Now we are able to see how the belief in the Word incarnate in Jesus can be explained in terms of these three frames of reference. In fact, this is the case with all events or movements or persons involved in the Christian gospel-event or gospel-story. Of the incarnation, with respect to the pre-existent Word the frame of reference is temporal; with respect to Jesus' coming down from heaven or the Father it is spatial; and with respect to the unity between the Father and the Son it is the one of distinction-within-unity. Hence the three reference frames overlap and fuse.

The same exposition can be given of the belief in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. For with respect to the risen-post-existent Jesus the frame of reference is temporal; with respect to his abiding presence with his disciples or with the Father it is spatial; and with respect to the inter-personal relation between God, Jesus and the disciples it is that of the distinction-within-unity.

Are these explanations which are articulated in those frames of reference real or imaginary? The answer to the question depends very much upon our way of thinking and reasoning, upon whether we employ relative (concrete) or invariant (abstract) frames of reference:

if relative, from whose viewpoint or from what standpoint, sc. from Jesus', the evangelist's or our own viewpoint, or from an historical, philosophical or theological standpoint; if invariant, on what ground or with what presupposition. However, in theological discourse, whether in descriptive, explanatory or confessional statement, Christian theologians have to employ both relative and invariant frames of reference.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, they have to acknowledge the analogical, metaphorical, symbolical and mythical function of those frames of reference, with the qualification that their theological discourse is conditioned and determined by the Judaeo-Christian theistic belief that God is a spiritual being and that man cannot confine that spiritual being either within the 'ordered totalities of concrete extension and duration'<sup>2</sup> of the humanly known spatio-temporal frame of reference, simple or complex, or within the ordered totalities of the ontologically structured metaphysical system of the humanly known distinction-within-unity frame of reference, ancient or modern.

However, for the sake of communication among people, unless we make use of the humanly known and intelligibly ordered totalities

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1. "As long as we are speaking of particular things at particular times in particular places, we cannot avoid employing relative expressions; for it is through our senses that we know the particular; and our senses are in particular places at particular times. On the other hand, invariant expression, which is independent of the spatio-temporal standpoint of particular thinkers is a property of abstract propositions; it can be demanded only of the principles and laws of a science ...." J. B. F. Lonergan, *Insight*, p.155. See also pp. 158 and 160.

2. v. J. B. F. Lonergan, *Insight*, pp.148ff., on the abstract intelligibility of space and time.

of concrete extension and duration and of the ontologically structured metaphysical system, how can we articulate our understanding of people's relations with, or experience of, the spiritual beings, whom we know and worship, sc. God and Jesus? To this effect we may join the Fourth evangelist and say,

" ... we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man." (John 3.11-13).

Since the reality of the life of human beings as known today has three successive, related but qualitatively different levels, sc. physical, mental and spiritual, in distinction-within-unity, Christian theology has to deal with the manifold experiences of the present living, what I call 'pneumatico-psycho-somatic' personal and inter-personal relational happening in their daily life and work. If the Christian religion can be properly designated a religion founded on, and/or a philosophy of life based upon Christian doctrinal confession and religious practices,<sup>1</sup> the shape of Christian confession which is Christian belief and at the same time Christian insight into Christian experiences, should take the form both of relative expressions and invariant expression. In view of more effective human communication and dialogue between human beings and religions

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1. cf. chap.I, p.36, on our understanding of the Christian religion.



Christian theology has to attempt, in Tillich's words, "to formulate the basic experiences which are universally valid in universally valid statements."<sup>1</sup>

On the ground of the foregoing consideration of the propriety and impropriety of our theological expression of the existence of God and the risen Jesus by the analogy of person within an ontologically structured metaphysical system, we are able to integrate and co-ordinate the Christian witnessing-believing-understanding of God, Jesus, mankind, world, culture and of the relations of all these to each other.

For now we are able to affirm intelligibly and reasonably that the uniqueness of Christian evangelical theology does not lie in the claim that Christian theologians are able to do better than the theologians of other religions, in that Christian theologians can prove that God is, or that God raised Jesus from the dead. What is unique in the Christian religion is that Christians believe in God and in Jesus, and on the ground of that belief they have the Christian theistic world-view, and further they are able to live by that belief in that theistic thought-world. The distinctive character of the Christian evangelical theology is that Christian theologians believe in God and in Jesus and on the ground of that belief they have the Christian theistic world-view, and further they are able to interpret and communicate Christians' witnessing-believing-understanding of God, Jesus, the Paraclete, mankind and the personal and inter-personal relational happenings, and the relations of all these to each other in their daily contact and

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1. v. Paul Tillich, The Future of Religions, p.94.

conflict in a world that is theistically understood. It is also within this mutual and common witnessing-believing-understanding of their common meaning that they find the significance of their common origin, identity, mission and destiny.

If Christian theology (narrower sense) has as its task to expound the intelligibility of the Christian witnessing-believing-understanding of the existence of God who is absolutely presupposed, we can legitimately affirm that this theology is the super stratum of Christian evangelical theology. We can claim also that human affairs are the substratum of Christian evangelical theology. In other words, anthropology or human sciences of all kinds, of all levels, of all ages and of all places, is the data of Christian evangelical theology. Further, we can affirm that world-views of all kinds, of all levels, of all ages and of all places, provide men and women with frames of reference to express and communicate human understanding of themselves and their environment, their origin, destiny, history, culture, science and religion, etc. Perhaps on this basis we may have a more constructive and fruitful dialogue between denominations, religions, sciences and cultures, respectively or combined.

While there are different shapes of expression and means of communication, they all depend on one's absolute presuppositions, personal upbringing and background, because one's world-view or-views are conditioned by them; and one's life is in part determined by one's world-view or views and in part by how one is open to one's own or others' fresh experiences and the witnessing-believing-understanding

of oneself, one's contemporaries, the world one is in, and the absolute presuppositions one holds, and the relations of all these to each other.

Thus, Christians or Christian theologians can quite legitimately claim that their particular theistic world-view provides them with their particular Judaeo-Christian theological frame of reference or perspective for expressing and communicating Christian belief, which, in theory, at least, is able to subsume all other common/sense and philosophical, ethical and religious witnessing-believing-understanding of mankind, the world, etc., because of the high quality of its theistic and messianic beliefs and of its doctrine of creation and of salvation history. However, the result is that we see in human history the creative products of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, its history, culture, science and religion, etc., which are now appreciated as a distinct and glorious contribution, now depreciated as an obscure and disgraceful setback to the welfare of mankind, or very often a fusion of these two in various degrees, in progress or decline, change and continuity. The Judaeo-Christian creation . . . , etc., should be taken as human creation based upon the Judaeo-Christian belief and world-view, propagation and assimilation. Only after we have said this, can we go on to follow the Johannine Jesus and say theologically that "the Father, who remains in me, does his own work" (14.10), and further say christologically that the Jesus "who remains in me does his work", and pneumatologically that the Paraclete "who remains in me does his work."



## CONCLUSION

The thesis has attempted to approach the theological thought of the Fourth evangelist as a whole. It has taken into account the hermeneutical circle - the interaction between the mind of the evangelist and that of a present day Christian interpreter. The methods employed are historical, philosophical and theological. The approaches to the Christian gospel-event are empirical in the task of interpretation and heuristic in the task of communication. The understanding reached in the three essays is as follows:

(1) The interpretation and construction of both the inherited traditional view and the present day view of the Christian gospel and religion have been attempted. An insight into the abstractness or universality of the subject-matter of the science of Christian evangelical theology opened up the possibility of discussing the absolute presuppositions and the fundamental Christian beliefs of the theological thought of the evangelist. While the propagation of the Christian gospel and religion is the mission of <sup>the</sup> Christian evangelist, the attempt to identify as well as to explain Christian absolute presuppositions and the fundamental beliefs is the task of the Christian theologian.

(2) The inquiry into the three historical phases of change and continuity from Judaism to Christianity enabled us to see the 'Judaeo-Jesus-Christian' theology in transition. These factors, the life and ministry of Jesus, the OT scripture, and Christians' fresh experiences, distinguished and eventually divided Christianity from Judaism. An insight into the evangelist's three interpretative patterns, the 'prophecy-fulfilment', the 'witnessing-to-Jesus' and the 'Jesus-sublating-the OT' pattern, enabled us to see the characteristics of

Christian religion and theology. Thus, our understanding of

- (a) the Johannine overall Gospel-image of Jesus, the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-post-existent Jesus, and
- (b) the two compound fundamental Christian beliefs, the belief in the contemporaneous living God and Jesus, and the belief in the incarnation and resurrection,

yields Johannine higher viewpoints, more comprehensive horizons and kaleidoscopic perspectives.

(3) By employing these viewpoints, horizons and perspectives, the three frames of reference and the ontologically structured metaphysical system in our construction and communication, Christian evangelical theology is able to integrate and co-ordinate, analyse and synthesize the Christians' witnessing-believing-understandings of God, Jesus, mankind, world, culture and of the relations of all these to each other. Now, Christians can affirm intelligibly and reasonably that the uniqueness of the Christian religion is found in the fact that Christians believe in God and in Jesus; and on the ground of that belief they hold the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of creation and the Judaeo-Christian theistic world-view, and further they are able to live by that belief in a world that is theistically understood. They can also affirm that the distinctive characteristic of the Christian evangelical theology is seen in the fact that Christian theologians believe in God and in Jesus; and on the ground of that belief they hold the Christian

world-view, and further they are able to interpret and communicate Christians' witnessing-believing-understandings of God, Jesus, the Paraclete (the Spirit of God and of Jesus), mankind, and the present, living, personal and inter-personal, relational happenings at every emerging present between God, Jesus and human beings in their daily contact and conflict in the world. The Christian evangelical theology is able to subsume all human daily experiences, philosophical understandings, moral practices and religious beliefs, because of the Christians' witnessing-believing-understanding of the living God, the crucified-risen Jesus, people and world.

The most significant of all the findings is that the thesis explicated or attempted to explicate and lay open the meaning of the contemporaneous divine presence and activity of the living God and the living Jesus with men and women of respective generations in love fellowship, mutual communication and communion, and in the world here and now in the emerging present.



## APPENDIX I How normative is the Fourth Gospel?

How normative, or in what sense normative, is the Fourth Gospel for Christians in their witnessing, believing and living? This is the question latent whenever Christians study or interpret the Fourth Gospel. The answer to the question depends upon one's approach and attitude towards the Fourth Gospel. It is a threefold answer.

(1) The Fourth Gospel can be regarded as one of the Christian classics. It contains the history of the early Church and the belief of the believing community in which the Gospel was formed. Our particular concern has been the history and thought of Jesus of Nazareth, of the Fourth evangelist and of the believing community to which the evangelist belonged. This approach, from a historical perspective, can legitimately remain at the level of the science of history. However, the Fourth Gospel is more than a history book which gives information on the religious life and the theological thought of the early Church.

(2) The second approach goes beyond the first. In learning how the evangelist articulated his witnessing-believing-understanding of the Christian gospel-stories or the gospel-life of Jesus, we view the Fourth Gospel as a mirror in which we reflect upon our witnessing-believing-understanding of the Christian gospel-stories and our articulation of our understanding. Our understanding and articulation will be criticised and judged by that of the evangelist, and vice versa. However, this approach may still remain at the level

of the science of history and theology. The Fourth Gospel is more than a history and theology book.

(3) The third approach is more comprehensive in that it subsumes the first and the second approaches. In this approach, our historico-theological believing-understanding of the Fourth Gospel, together with that of the gospel of today, may be able to guide and prepare us to commit ourselves to believe in God and in Jesus and to live authentically in our daily living personal and inter-personal relational happenings, in the emerging present and in the future. This is the purpose for which the evangelist wrote the Gospel, " ... these are written that you may believe ... and that believing you may have life in his name." (20.31).

The Fourth Gospel, then, is not only to be viewed as a document which informs us of the past, of the history of the early Church, or which provides us with a norm to guide our thinking, understanding and reasoning, by means of comparing the remote past and the recent past experience, understanding and judgement. Nor is the Gospel merely to be approached as an authoritative norm to which the ensuing Christian generations have to conform.

The Fourth Gospel is to be approached as an ancillary norm to guide and prepare Christians and their contemporaries for sharing and participating in the emerging event of the Christian love-fellowship. For in the actual sharing and participation in this living inter-personal relational happening, one may be able to see and identify anew the demonstration of God's love in Jesus for mankind and the love-fellowship between God, Jesus and believers. Because of this fresh experience and insight into it, Christians and

Christian communities may be enabled to utter an unambiguous "Yes!" to what God has done, is doing and will be doing for the whole of mankind.

During Jesus' life-time, it was the present working of God in Jesus, or Jesus' belief in God and his obedience to God that authenticated the OT scripture and Jesus' presence, words and deeds, but not vice versa. For the OT, the book, and Jesus, his history and theology, alone, could neither make the Jews understand and believe in God who sent Jesus and in Jesus whom God had sent, nor give them power to live authentically as the people of God. It was the present working of the living God and the presence of Jesus and his ministry that authenticated the OT and Jewish Christian testimony, belief and life. In the same way, the Fourth Gospel, the book, and the Gospel-life of Jesus, his history and theology, alone, can neither make our contemporaries understand and believe in Jesus and in God, nor give Christians power to live authentically as the disciples of Jesus. It is the present working of the living God and Jesus in and among believers today that authenticates the Fourth Gospel and the Christian testimony, belief and life.

Here lies the dialectical tension

- (i) between the contemporaneous living God and Jesus, and the normative character of the Fourth Gospel and of Christians' preaching of the Christian gospel,
- (ii) between the contemporaneous living God and the normative character of the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-post-existent Jesus, and



- (iii) between the normative character of the Fourth Gospel and that of our contemporary Christians' preaching of the Christian gospel.

Both the Fourth Gospel and our contemporary Christians' preaching derive their authority and normative character from the present working of the living God and Jesus. For one's believing-understanding of the Christian gospel-event, ancient or modern, or even the believing-understanding of the present working of the living God and Jesus, may not lead one to live an authentic life. That depends on how one believes and in believing, how one faces up to the newly emerging situations in one's daily life and work.

Thus, the Fourth Gospel is viewed as a derived norm for Christians in their witnessing, believing and living. It derives its authority from the final authority and the ultimate norm, the contemporaneous living God and Jesus. In other words, a Christian's witnessing-believing-understanding of the contemporaneous living God and Jesus together with that of the Christian gospel yield a Christian's witnessing-believing-understanding of the authority and normative character of the Fourth Gospel.

APPENDIX II How to talk of God and of the incarnate-  
crucified-risen Jesus?

Can we really talk of God in himself? I have to acknowledge that I cannot and that I do not know of any theological system that is competent to do it.<sup>1</sup>

The first two verses of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel explain God in himself, sc. the relation between the Word and God before the creation of the World. Our answer has been that this kind of talk is a Christian confessional statement. However, God in heaven is, to employ Lonergan's words, "a transcendental notion of being as to-be-known". For without this notion of being, "transcendental mystery can come to be named nothing at all".<sup>2</sup>

John 1.1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God", therefore, is the statement of the

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1. cf. R. Bultmann, Faith and Understanding, Eng.tr., vol.1, chap.2, "What does it mean to speak of God?" "Even this lecture is a speaking about God and as such, if God is, it is sin, and if God is not, it is meaningless. Whether it has meaning and whether it is justified - none of us can judge." p.65.

2. v. Method in Theology, p.110. These statements have to be understood within the confines of the propriety and impropriety of the use of "a transcendental notion of being". Lonergan defines the term "transcendental" where he gives account of what he means by "transcendental method". He says, "... I conceive method concretely. I conceive it not in terms of principles and rules, but as a normative pattern of operations with cumulative and progressive results. I distinguish the methods appropriate to particular fields and, on the other hand, their common core and ground, which I name transcendental method. Here, the word, transcendental, is employed in a sense analogous to Scholastic usage, for it is opposed to the categorical (or predicamental). But my actual procedure also is transcendental in the Kantian sense, inasmuch as it brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object in so far as that knowledge is a priori." p.13, footnote 4. v. also pp.203-207, above, our discussion on transcendental being and transcendental mystery.

Judaean-Christian theistic belief. But the evangelist is not concerned with the question of how to prove, or ratify, this belief or the believed reality.

John 16.16 reads: "A little while, and you will see me no more; again a little while, and you will see me." Is the "little while"<sup>1</sup> problematic? Where did Jesus go during the period between his death and resurrection? It is no problem at all. For the evangelist employs the idea of 'being lifted up' to subsume all at once: crucifixion, resurrection, exaltation, ascension, glorification and coming again in terms and in the image of the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, which is the Spirit of God and of Jesus.

Notwithstanding this, there are problems in the account of the Easter stories in chapter 20, such as the questions, whether Jesus really went back to the Father in heaven during the period between the time after he was seen by Mary and the time he was seen by his disciples, whether Mary held or touched Jesus, and whether Thomas touched Jesus. These questions are quite irrelevant to the evangelist. They are questions which can only be raised after the evangelist had asked certain questions and stated his answers as we have them in the Gospel. These are questions emerging out of our reflection on the Gospel-stories about the risen Jesus, rather than questions of the evangelist.

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1. It was problematic, of course, for the disciples (16.17-19). But the evangelist had a characteristic understanding of the issue (13.33-35, cf. 7.33-36; 14.18-20; 16.16-28).



The pre-existence or the post-existence of Jesus are not problems for the evangelist either. They are problems emerging out of our reflection on the Johannine incarnation and resurrection faith. The Johannine problem is that of the contemporaneous Jesus, contemporaneous with those who are contemporary with the evangelist.<sup>1</sup> The intention of his writing the Gospel is to guide readers to identify the earthly Jesus at once with the Word incarnate and with the crucified-risen Jesus. The pre-existence of the incarnate Word and the post-existence of the crucified-risen Jesus are part and parcel of his belief in God and in Jesus.

The contemporaneous Jesus, i.e. the Jesus who is here-and-now with believers on earth, is the vital concern of the early Church and the evangelist, in view of the fact that in this man, in his earthly ministry and in his 'being lifted up' on the cross, both the Christian community and Christianity have their origin, identity and destiny. Jesus on earth is the necessary cause and the ultimate norm of Christian belief and life, and the absolute presupposition of Christian evangelical theology, even though the image of the earthly Jesus and the crucified-risen Jesus which Christians or Christian communities hold may vary. He is here on earth, and now, with all his disciples. It can never be over-emphasised that the Johannine Jesus is always and constantly stationed on earth. The Johannine Jesus is not in heaven, even after his death and resurrection. Is the living contemporaneous Jesus the message which the early Church, the evangelist and Christians of all ages attempt to understand and communicate?

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1. However, the answer the evangelist gave to his own problem raises a further problem - the fusion of two historical standpoints, sc. that of Jesus (A.D. 28) and that of the evangelist (A.D. 90). See above, pp.192-195.

### APPENDIX III The incarnation-resurrection faith and the Fourth Gospel

The purpose of this essay is to see how the evangelist's presentation of the Gospel-life of Jesus is influenced and determined by his witnessing-believing-understanding of the incarnation and resurrection faith. While the two beliefs cannot be separated, they can and at times must be distinguished and differentiated in Christian theological thinking and reasoning. We shall begin with the resurrection faith.

The first occasion in which the evangelist explicitly mentions the ascension of the Son of man is in John 6.62, " ... What if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?" This saying is given after the evangelist has presented two scandals. First, his disciples, who were probably would-be disciples, rather than the twelve, were scandalised by his human origin. Jesus is "the son of Joseph ...." (6.42). This human reality is too obvious and decisive for them to set aside or rather too difficult to be reconciled with his divine origin. The second scandal is caused by the discourse on eating his flesh and drinking his blood (6.53-58). This horrifying thought, most horrifying particularly to the Jews, offended them. However, it gives Jesus occasion to present the saying, " ... what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?" From the resurrection faith standpoint it is obvious that the saying is meant to be understood as Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Further, these words "ascending where he was before" are meant to be understood in the sense that the descent

of the Son of man, sc. the incarnation faith, is presupposed in this resurrection faith saying. The would-be disciples left Jesus altogether. But Jesus challenged the twelve to decide either to reject him or to surrender themselves to him.

Jesus predicted his imminent departure in 7.33, " ... I shall be with you a little longer, and then I go to him who sent me." The idea of death is not apparent here. However, the words 'I go to him who sent me' suggests that he was sent, that he came and that he is with them now. Again the incarnation faith is presupposed or understood.

The context in which Jesus predicted his imminent departure is the one in which the Pharisees and the chief priests sent some guards to arrest him (7.32). In chap. 8, the same imminent departure is mentioned in the context where the Jews sarcastically say, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" (8.22).

Since the plot to kill Jesus is mentioned as early as 5.17 and repeated in 7.1, 19f., 25 and later in 8.37, 40, we may fairly safely infer that the plot is implied or presupposed in these two sayings, 7.33 and 8.21. Hence, we may conclude that 'I go to him who sent me' in 7.33, refers to his death and resurrection.

Another saying of Jesus, "You (the Jews) are from below, and I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he." (8.23f.), raises the further question about who Jesus is. Later Jesus says to them, "When you have



lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he ...." (8.28). Here again the 'lifting up' of the Son of man includes the idea of death and resurrection.

The point is this, the further the Gospel-life of Jesus progresses, the greater the conflict between the Jews and Jesus becomes and the more certain and inevitable his death. Thus chaps. 11-12 are geared to the certainty and inevitability of his death. Further, it is in the context of the impending imminent departure of Jesus from his disciples, sc. his death on the cross, and of the promise of his return to them that the farewell discourse (chaps. 13-17) is set. This impending crisis, in the emerging present, is the occasion when Jesus' disciples of all ages will become aware of their origin and identity, and obligation to carry out their entrusted mission in the world. It is no wonder that in the farewell discourse we can find the evangelist's contribution on the teaching of Christian discipleship and the love-fellowship of the Christian community. The next four chapters, chaps. 18-21, are his testimony to the Passion, Easter and the Appearances of the crucified-risen Jesus. Thus far we have examined the resurrection faith in chaps. 6-21.

What is the situation for the presentation of the resurrection faith in the earlier chapters of the Gospel? The 'lifting up' of the Son of man which connotes the death-resurrection of Jesus is mentioned as early as 3.14f., " ... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

The death-resurrection of Jesus is presented earlier still in chap.2, in the episode of the cleansing of the temple. When the Jews demand of Jesus a sign for his unusual action, Jesus says to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (2.19). The saying is misunderstood by the Jews theologically or spiritually but not historically or concretely in terms of the physical character of the building. Nevertheless, the evangelist's parenthetical explanation in 2.21f. is both historical and theological in terms of Jesus' physical body, his death and resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

The disciples understood what Jesus' saying meant only when Jesus had been raised from the dead. The point is that Jesus' death and resurrection are the clue to understanding his words, teachings and sayings, and his deeds, works and actions, as these of course are illuminated by the OT scriptures, together with the disciples' fresh religious experiences. Our point is that the

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1. Of the resurrection we cannot, as the naive realist does, say that Jesus' body was raised. This is not implied in the text here. The evangelist employs concrete objects or data of sense or events to symbolise or to bring out further theological, spiritual or religious insight or meaning which goes beyond what they concretely refer to or directly express. This is the case with Jesus' presentation of heavenly things. This reminds us of the way in which human affairs are interpreted as Christian gospel events. For example, Moses lifted up the serpent ...; the bread we eat every day (6.26); the water of Jacob's well (4.10); rivers of living water that signify the flow of the Spirit (7.38f.). Is chap.11, the resurrection narrative of Lazarus, to be understood or interpreted in the same way? If so, it would symbolise a rebirth and a new life which is lived and experienced by those who believe in Jesus and in God and who live by that believing-understanding. Further it would symbolise the Christian believing-understanding of the resurrection after death, sc. Christian life after physical death (11.21-27).

resurrection faith is presented as early as chap.2, the beginning not of Jesus' empirical life, but of the Gospel-life of Jesus according to the Fourth evangelist.<sup>1</sup>

Even earlier still, in 1.29 and 36, the death of Jesus is implied or presupposed in the title 'the Lamb of God'. If we do not count the birth stories in Matthew and Luke and the story of Jesus' boyhood in Luke, practically all four canonical Gospels agree that the Gospel-life of Jesus begins with the witness of John the baptist. However, the baptist as presented in the first three Gospels was neither so sure nor so positive in regard to Jesus' messiahship and sonship as the baptist of the Fourth Gospel.

John the baptist, in the Fourth Gospel, has a very positive testimony to bear from the very beginning. There is no room for doubt at any point in his testimony in all these passages: 1.6-8; 1.15; 1.19-35; 3.25-30; 5.33-35. Thus the evangelist's primary concern is theological and this concern overrides the historical in his presentation of the Gospel-life of John the baptist. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus dies for the world. Does the theology of the vicarious death of Jesus

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1. There are both historical and theological contexts fused in all gospel narratives or discourses. The arrangement and the combination of these two contexts within the ordered totalities of each written Gospel varied depending on the emphasis, theology, beliefs, cultural background and the needs of the congregation to which the Gospel was addressed. Hence when we interpret every gospel pericope we should distinguish and differentiate these two contexts. In other words, we have to understand it in the historical and theological context supplied by each evangelist.



belong to the theology of the gospel tradition of the early Church, and does the evangelist merely repeat it without any further elaboration or sublation? The fact that he uses it twice is noteworthy. The emphasis is probably upon his death. However, the significance of his death as vicarious and redemptive is elaborated and further sublated in terms of other models, such as the good shepherd (10.11, 14f.), a grain of wheat (12.23f.), the greatest love man can have for his friends (15.13), the destruction of the temple (2.19-21), and most significant of all the 'lifting up' of the Son of man.

One may ask the question whether in the prologue the motif of resurrection faith or the theology of the death and resurrection is implied at all. The most likely reference in the prologue is the word 'glory' in 1.14. The verse is taken to be the text par excellence of the confessional statement of the incarnation faith and its theology, "... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."

Readers tend to identify this glory with the one manifested in Jesus' signs; the wedding at Cana (2.1-12) and the death and resurrection of Lazarus (11.1-57, especially see vv. 4 and 40). These are the two cases where the glory, which was manifested in Jesus' signs, is identified.

There is, too, the glory with which Jesus asked the Father to glorify the Son. It is the same glory as that which Jesus had with

the Father before the world was made (17.5). Is this the glory of the pre-existent Word of God (1.1f.)? And there is the future glory which the Spirit of truth will give Jesus (16.14). However, one of the evangelist's distinctive theological contributions is his presentation of the doxological and soteriological significance of Jesus' death and resurrection depicted in the 'lifting up' of the Son of man (7.39; 12.16; 13.31f.; 17.1, 5, which are doxological; and 12.23, 32; 3.14-17, which are soteriological; though the two are distinguishable, they are mostly inextricably fused together).

In the light of the doxological and soteriological significance of the Johannine usage of the term 'glory', we can intelligibly and reasonably affirm that the glory of 1.14 subsumes that which is manifested in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus and his saving mission in the world. A common/sense understanding of man's life in which death comes at the end of a life-span easily misleads readers to overlook the insight that there is the fusion of incarnation and resurrection faith in the glory of 1.14, especially when resurrection faith is embedded in the term 'glory' within a context where the emphasis and primary concern are laid upon incarnation faith.

At this juncture we have to distinguish the glory which is manifested through event and that which is conferred on or attached to a person. This is to say that our concern is with the distinction between event and person rather than between two glories. For the use of the term 'event' involves a punctiliar notion of time. An event has its beginning and end, its antecedents and effects. When it occurs according to proven and known laws we say that we understand

how it happened. But there are events concerning which we do not know how and why they happened in the way they happened, and so no intelligible explanation can be given.

Nevertheless, when we think of the Jesus-event as man-event, we are considering the events of his birth, his coming into being, his earthly life, ministry and death on the cross, and the significance of these events. These events and their significances are those which can be understood and expressed within the confines of the contemporary conceptual structures or the universe of discourse within the reach of mankind. Further, when we think of the Jesus-event as the gospel-event, we are considering the divine events and the spiritual significance of the incarnation of the pre-existent Word of God, his birth, life and ministry, and of the resurrection of the crucified Messiah, the going back of the Son to the Father, and the coming again of the risen-exalted-post-existent Jesus to his disciples in Spirit.

However, if we think of the person, Jesus, in whom these events or movements, interpretations or meanings and Christian witnessing-believing-understandings converge and are incapsulated, the combination of or the distinction-within-unity correlation between the two events, sc. historical and theological, or the two movements, sc. coming and going, ascending and descending, is philosophically and spiritually possible and intelligible. For existing persons persist through time, history and culture, and spiritual crisis. Again, only analogically, we are able to affirm this possibility and intelligibility. Thus a distinct individual, in his continuous living and existing, can be known and identified, because he is the



same individual person. For without the idea of person or some kind of "transcendental notion of being" we cannot claim intelligibly and reasonably Christian knowledge of Jesus, be it the historical or the risen Jesus, the pre-existent Word of God or the post-existent Jesus, or even the Christian God who was, is and will be. For, humanly speaking, to know a person is to be able to identify the person one knows.<sup>1</sup>

If we apply this distinction between event and person, a corollary is the fact that, when we think of his glory in terms of event we look for particular events in which Jesus was an agent and by means of which his glory was manifested. While when we think of it in terms of person we may or may not think of one particular period or segment of his life, such as the period before or after the incarnation or the resurrection, before or after the temptation or the confession of Peter on the way to Caesarea Philippi; or we may or may not think of one particular event, such as his birth, baptism, death etc. However, we may, in one thrust, think of the overall Gospel-image of Jesus, sc. the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-exalted-post-existent Jesus. Further, we may understand, in one thrust, the overall Gospel-image of Jesus. Thus to/<sup>a</sup>Christian believer this Jesus, whether in toto or in part, may be the object of worship as well as the object of his

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1. This is what I take to be Cupitt's assertion which he presents in his recent book, Christ and the Hiddenness of God - Christians know Jesus and through Jesus they know God.

witnessing-believing-understanding, or in Lonergan's words the object of his 'experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding'.<sup>1</sup>

While Jesus' person and work can be distinguished and differentiated, they cannot be separated at any time or point of his life. Thus, the glory of 1.14, " ... his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father", is that which is incapsulated in the Johannine Jesus, the Christ and the Son of God.

Thus we may infer and conclude that the resurrection faith is implied, presupposed or incapsulated in 1.14, and that the whole Gospel can be more intelligible and reasonable, historically and theologically, if it is read and interpreted from the standpoint both of the incarnation and of the resurrection faith.

If we employ the overall Gospel-image of Jesus to explain the

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1. Suffice it here to point out how complex it can be when one attempts to grasp the distinction-within-unity correlation that emerges out of the combination between the overall Gospel-image of Jesus and the conscious and intentional operations of Christian experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding in one's daily living and worshipping. To work out the implication of the combination is outside the scope of the present thesis. However, what Lonergan says about transcendental method may reveal some of the problem and complexity. "Now in a sense everyone knows and observes transcendental method. Everyone does so, precisely in the measure that he is attentive, intellectual, reasonable, responsible. But in another sense it is quite difficult to be at home in transcendental method, for that is not to be achieved by reading books or listening to lectures or analysing language. It is a matter of heightening one's consciousness by objectifying it, and that is something that each one, ultimately, has to do in himself and for himself. In what does this objectification consist? It is a matter of applying the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious. Thus, if for brevity's sake we denote the various operations on the four levels by the principal occurrence on that level, we may speak of the operation as experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. But what is conscious can be intended. To apply the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious is a fourfold matter of (1) experiencing one's experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding, (2) understanding the unity and relations of one's experienced experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding, (3) affirming the reality of one's experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and (4) deciding to operate in accord with the norm imminent in the spontaneous relatedness of one's experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding." Method in Theology, pp.14f.

relation between Jesus and God, of Jesus with himself and between Jesus and mankind, it will appear as follows:

- (a) The distinction-within-unity relationship between God the Father and the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-exalted-post-existent Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- (b) The distinction-within-unity relationship between the humanity and divinity of the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-exalted-post-existent Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- (c) The distinction-within-unity relationship between the pre-existent-incarnate-crucified-risen-exalted-post-existent Jesus Christ, the Son of God and each individual human being and the whole of mankind.

Surely this believing-understanding of the correlation between the Johannine Jesus, the Christian God and mankind is extensive in scope and complex in form. Notwithstanding the extensiveness and the complexity, this believing-understanding constitutes the content of the Christian evangelical theology (wider sense). For it is within this scope and range that Christians of all ages understand the content of the Christian gospel as it is contained in the Fourth Gospel, and identify God, Jesus and mankind.

Further, a living person always and necessarily has his past, present and future. If the risen and living Jesus is contemporaneous



with post-Easter generations, he is contemporaneous with us today, and when we think about and talk to this Jesus we have to commit ourselves to the living Jesus who has his past, present and future in an unified whole, in one identical, individual person.

If both the person and work of Jesus are necessary for reformulating or reconstructing Christian knowledge of Jesus and for re-identifying the Christian Jesus to whom Christians and Christian communities commit and recommit themselves, then both the incarnation and the resurrection faith are of paramount importance.

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